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They stood glaring at each other, motionless as statues—like maddened beasts preparing to leap.

HAWK-EYE HARRY, The Young Trapper Ranger.

BY OLL COOMES,

Author of "Frank Bell, the Boy Spy," "Shooting Star, the Boy Chief," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

HAWKEYE HARRY.

THE geographical formation of that portion of our country lying between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, and south of the forty-third degree of north latitude, now comprising the State of Iowa, furnishes a vast field for the pen of the romancer. Though devoid of bold scenery and wild, mountainous ruggedness, it presents a romantic picturesqueness which the hand of the Creator has modified to a degree well calculated to awaken enthusiastic admiration.

Grand prairies roll away in billowy undulations from the background of the landscape. These are diversified by meandering rivers that find an outlet in the Mississippi or Missouri, many of them flowing through long vistas of deep forests. Small clumps, or "mottes" of timber, dot the great expanse like islands in the ocean, and here and there innumerable small lakes lie glimmering upon the bosom of the plain like tiny jewels.

This portion of the land of the great North-west was once the paradise of the red-man. There he lived in all his characteristics

of laziness and savage glory. Then the woods abounded with game and the rivers and lakes with fish, and he took them without fear or contention. But, at last, the crack of the white man's rifle awoke him from his dreams of savage bliss and aroused him to action. All the jealousy of his nature was excited. Grasping his tomahawk and scalping-knife, he went forth to meet the intruders who had come to hunt and trap upon his grounds.

From that time dark shadows went flitting through the woods or stealing over the plains like spirits of evil. The air was rife with the presence of death, but, despite its peril, the bold hunter and hardy pioneer pressed forward to contend with the red-man, and plant the seed of civilization.

Our story opens when the settlers had gained a firm foothold in the eastern portion of the territory, and many daring trappers had penetrated to the very heart of the "Indian country."

With two of those fearless men our story especially deals.

It was October, and the day was near its close.

Down in a little valley on the banks of a purling stream that found its way into the

crystal waters of Lake Boyer, stood a curious-looking structure built entirely of stone, and in the form of a cone. It was small, but firmly constructed, showing the unmistakable handiwork of the white man. A door in the side looked down the valley, and its sides were pierced by numerous loopholes.

The location was well selected for this rude trapper-home, the valley being inclosed by high, rugged bluffs, whose face was covered with clustering parasites and prickly ash. It could be entered by one course only, and that was by following up the little stream which found its source within the valley, and was fed by numerous springs.

On the day and hour in question, the figure of one of the occupants of that conical structure issued from within, and, pausing just without, swept the valley and hills around him with an eagle-like glance.

He was a youth, probably in his eighteenth year. His form was not overly large for one of his age, but perfectly developed in all the attributes of manhood. His broad shoulders, deep chest, and muscular limbs denoted strength, and the quick glance of the eye and the ease and grace of movement were indicative of suppleness and activity;

and all these, taken together, were proofs of high health and vigor. His face wore an expression of great firmness and decision. It was handsome, but bronzed to the hue of an Indian's by exposure to sun and wind.

He was dressed in a complete suit of buck-skin, with the exception of his cap. This was a decidedly odd affair, made of the feathered skin of a gray hawk.

From this novel cap, and the remarkable keenness of his vision, Harry Houston, the young trapper and ranger, had been styled "Hawkeye Harry," by his friends.

He was armed with a rifle, knife and tomahawk, and, as he was in the midst of an enemy's country, it required great precaution to guard against a surprise by the cunning foe; hence his careful survey of the valley and bluffs around him on issuing from the conical hut.

"How is 't, Hawkeye?" called a voice from within, when the youth had scanned the surrounding bluffs; "see any red-skins hanging around?"

"No," replied the young trapper; "it's not likely they'd let themselves be seen if they were about."

"In course they'd keep hid, if they could," returned his companion; "but I've known

'em eyes o' your'n to see a red-skin thro' a ten-foot rock, and—"

"Hold on, old friend, you're going to extremes now," said Hawkeye Harry; "and as I've no time to spare, I believe I'll run down to the lake and look after the traps."

"Well, if ye do, Harry, keep yer eyes skinned, fur I have every reason to believe that red-skins hankerin' arter our skulps. Old Optic is no greeny in sich matters."

"All right, Optic; I'll take your advice," said our hero, and throwing his rifle across his shoulder, he set off at a rapid pace down the valley.

In his haste, however, he did not forget the injunction of his friend, and kept a wary watch about him. He would have done this without his friend's advice, for few were better posted in woodcraft and Indian cunning than the young woodman, and through force of habit, precaution had become second nature to him.

He soon reached an open plateau where the little creek debouched from the valley. Here he left the stream, and, crossing the opening, plunged into the deep woods beyond. A few minutes' walk now brought him to the lake, around whose shore he had set a number of traps.



Having made certain that no lurking enemies were about, either upon the bosom of the lake or in the woods, he began a careful examination of his traps. The first one he came to he found contained an otter. Securing the animal, he reset the trap and moved on to the second. But here he met with a disappointment. The trap was sprung and showed signs of having contained an otter, but it was gone. He would have thought no more about it than that the animal had escaped had he not made another discovery. Human tracks were in the sand upon the beach, and it required but a single glance to tell him that they were made by the moccasined feet of an Indian.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "Old Optic is right. The red-skins are around, darn their thieving pictures! And now I might as well pack my traps to the Cone, and turn my attention to Indian-hunting and red scalps. But I'll see where these tracks lead to, first."

Dropping his rifle into the hollow of his left arm, the youth followed the imprints around the lake shore. They led him to the third trap, which he saw had been robbed also. But here the red robber had quit the lake shore, and turned off into the woods. The young trapper followed his trail, and, to his surprise, soon discovered that the thief had been joined by a number of other Indians.

Hawkeye Harry followed on. The trail was broad and plain, and he was thereby enabled to move quite rapidly. But the shadows of evening were beginning to gather over the forest, and it would not be long before darkness would conceal the trail. However, as it was fresh, he had hopes of overhauling the party before darkness set in.

The main object of his pursuit was to ascertain whether the savages were a war or hunting-party, and to what tribe they belonged. By gaining this information he would be enabled to judge of the magnitude of the danger and trouble to which he and his old friend Optic would be exposed.

With every faculty on the alert, he pressed forward, and just as the sun was going down he was brought to a sudden halt by sight of a thin, white wreath of smoke floating up from the tree-tops a short distance in advance of him.

He at once concluded that the Indians he was following had halted for the night, and that the smoke was rising from their camp-fire. So, leaving the trail, he began a careful reconnaissance of the place where he supposed the encampment to be. But, to his surprise, he found neither Indians nor fire.

Then he thought he might have been mistaken in the smoke; but, upon a more careful survey of the surroundings, he saw that he had not been deceived.

Above the top of the very tree—a giant basswood—under which he was standing, he saw thin wreaths of smoke rising upward and drifting away in the breeze.

But, from whence did it originate? There was no sign of fire about. The tree showed no break in the surface of its bark for fully fifty feet above where the first limbs put out. There was nothing suspicious about the tree, yet it was a mystery where the smoke came from.

Near by, a little creek went rippling over its stony bed and poured its waters into the Boyer river, a few rods away; and while Harry stood pondering over the mystery of the smoke, his practiced ear caught the sound of swashing water—a sound that was not natural, and that broke suddenly and harshly upon his ear.

The sound emanated from water flowing below where he stood! Glancing around, he was not a little startled by seeing a black object heave upward in the center of the creek by some unknown power!

At that point the creek was over ten feet wide and scarcely two inches in depth. A few feet lower down, the water rushed over a kind of rapids, the foot of which was some fifteen feet below the surface of the stream above the rapids.

Hawkeye Harry fixed his eyes upon the black object so mysteriously thrust upward from the bed of the creek, but the gathering shadows of evening prevented him from gaining a definite knowledge of its true nature. He was possessed of little of that superstition so characteristic of bordermen, and was on the point of advancing to examine the strange object more closely when a new sight caused him to start back into the shadows, with sudden alarm.

CHAPTER II. MORE MYSTERIES.

It was a strange, fearful object—some living creature—a black, hairy mass, that arose from the very bed of the creek.

Was it a human, or was it a beast? was it either? The young trapper asked himself; but the next instant, before he could arrive at any definite decision, he was startled by a low scream, like that of a panther. The sound came from the dense thicket on the opposite side of the stream, not over three rods away, and clutching his rifle in a firm grasp, he turned his eyes upon the thicket, expecting to see, the next moment, a panther come bounding from its covert toward him. But he was happily disappointed. No beast made its appearance, nor was the scream repeated.

Slowly his head was turned, and his eyes again sought for that fearful form that he had seen rise from the bed of the stream; but, to his surprise, it was gone! Even the black object, which had first made its appearance, had vanished as mysteriously as it had come, and the water was rippling as smoothly on as when he had first gazed upon its bosom.

Harry, considerably mystified by what he had seen and heard, resolved to know what it all meant. For the first time he had witnessed that for which he could not account. Without the slightest fear, he pushed out from his covert and waded into the stream.

As before stated, the water was not over two inches in depth, and, being clear as crystal, he was enabled to see every pebble in the stony bottom, despite the gathering shadows. But, on reaching the point where that mysterious creature had arisen, he was surprised to find the bed of the creek of solid rock and gravel. There was no sign of an opening in the bottom. All that he did see was that the gravel and sand had been disturbed.

Approaching darkness prevented further investigations, and, regaining his covert on the shore, he resolved to wait a while longer, in hopes of receiving some adequate explanation of the mystery that had baffled him.

Soon after dark the moon came up, and, as the shrubbery on the east side of the creek was quite low and sparse, its soft

beams fell full upon the rippling waters of the stream, and enabled the young trapper to watch closely that point which had so deeply arrested his attention before night.

As the hours wore on, a deep silence came over the woodland, that was unpleasant to the watcher. Such a silence was not natural in the forest, at that time. To one versed in woodcraft and nature's voice, it boded danger. Not the chirrup of a cricket, the hum of an insect nor the rustle of a leaf could be heard; and even the ripple of the little stream seemed toned down to a sad murmur.

With every faculty on the alert, Harry waited and watched.

The minutes dragged by on leaden feet. Then to the ear of the young trapper came a splash, splash in the water in the stream, above where he sat.

The sound was produced by some one, or something wading in the bed of the creek. With steady eye he watched for the approach of the unknown.

He soon came—a tall, powerful Indian warrior, naked to the loin-cloth, with plumed head, and face and breast streaked and ringed with war-paint, until he appeared the demon of hideousness.

He clutched a tomahawk in one hand and was moving in an attitude and manner that denoted extreme caution.

Hawkeye Harry knew he was an enemy to be feared, yet he could not help admiring his tall, powerful form and handsome proportions.

Just opposite Harry the savage stopped and bent his head in the attitude of listening, when something went whirling through the air and struck the savage upon the tufted head. With a wail he staggered forward, and fell full length in the water, where he lay struggling in all the agonies of death, for several moments.

Then from the shadows of the opposite side of the stream, the young trapper saw a human figure creep out into the water and approach the prostrate form of the Indian.

The moon shone full upon the scene, but Harry could not tell whether the slayer was a white man or Indian. He was enveloped in the folds of a red blanket, while his head was covered by a sort of hood, and a veil of long, yellow hair hung down over the face.

Approaching the prostrate body of the savage, the creeping figure bent over it. Then from the folds of the blanket a pair of hands were put out. One of them seized the savage by the scalp-lock, and the other, which held a gleaming knife, described a circle about the dead warrior's head.

Then the figure stood erect. In one hand it held a reeking scalp, and in the other the glittering blade, unstained with blood, so quick had the fearful deed been done.

For a moment the mysterious slayer stood motionless, regarding his ghastly trophy, apparently, with the deepest admiration.

In the moonbeams he appeared a frightful and repulsive object, with his hooded head, veiled face and shrouded form.

Who was he? From whence came he? Scarcely had these questions taken form, when the unknown figure spurned the dead body of the savage with his foot, and then turning and going a few paces down the creek, he stopped and exclaimed aloud:

"Another Sioux scalp for the Unknown! Oh, food of vengeance!"

Hawkeye Harry started. That voice sounded strangely familiar to him. He would have sworn it was that of his friend, Old Optic. But, if it was not his, the remarkable similarity of voices was a strange coincidence indeed.

For some time Harry remained undecided as to how he should act, and before he could arrive at any definite conclusion, he saw fully a score of Indian warriors leap—from the very air it seemed—in a circle around the Unknown! A war-whoop awoke the awful silence of the woods as twenty tomahawks were raised aloft in the air to strike the veiled avenger down.

"Twenty to one are too many," said Hawkeye Harry, to himself, all the courage of his heart aroused, and, raising his rifle, he glanced quickly along the barrel and fired.

A savage fell dead, and, simultaneously with his fall, Harry saw the Unknown avenger sink down—swallowed up in the creek from mortal view; he heard the rush and roar of waters around him, and, terror-stricken by the shot from behind, and the sudden disappearance of the Unknown, he saw the savages shrink back—turn and glide into the friendly shelter of their native haunts.

For several moments Harry remained motionless, pondering over the mysteries of the wild drama he had just seen enacted within the little creek; then, as his eyes wandered back to the slain savage in the water, it reminded him of the fact that the Indians would soon recover from their fear and terror, and return in search of him who had fired the shot. So, slinging his rifle over his shoulder, by means of a strap attached to it for that purpose, he drew his hunting-knife, and gliding from his covert, set off on his return to the Cone.

It was not his intention to pursue the course back that he had come, but to endeavor to reach the Cone by a nearer route. He was well acquainted with the topography of the country thereabouts, and having shaped his course, he pressed forward at a rapid pace. But, despite his eagerness and haste, his mind went back to the scenes he had witnessed a few minutes previous. And somehow or other, he could not help confounding the voice of the veiled Unknown with that of his friend, Old Optic.

"If Old Optic had had anything to do with what I have seen to-night," mused our hero, "the fact will be confirmed by his absence from the Cone when I reach there. But, if he has any secrets—why, I'll open 'em!"

To avoid a wide detour, he resolved to cross a deep chasm known among the hunters and trappers as the Black Gorge. This the young trapper had often accomplished, yet at a great risk, for he had to swing himself down the face of one cliff and up the other, by means of the frail parasites that grew thereon. But, he never hesitated in the face of such dangers, and at once pushed on toward the gorge.

In a moment he stood upon its brink. He stopped and listened. That ominous silence still hung over the forest, and only the faint roar of water down in the deep rift could be heard. To reach a point where the cliffs were less high, he moved along up the gorge. His attention was arrested by what he had never noticed before. A tree had been uprooted and was lying across the abyss, spanning it from cliff to cliff.

At this point the gorge was some fifty feet deep, and about thirty in width. On the opposite side of the chasm, near where the tree had fallen, stood an elm that had grown outward, at quite an inclination, over the edge of the cliff, to court the invigorating freedom of the opening. A single branch of this tree was thrust outward, and drooping downward, its foliage touched the fallen log near the middle of that part spanning the abyss, thus completely screening from view the opposite end and the cliff.

Here seemed to Harry a streak of luck, for the rude bridge would enable him to cross without going further out of the way.

Arranging his rifle firmly at his back so that he could use both arms freely in maintaining an easy balance, in crossing the log, he stepped upon it and began moving slowly across.

The moon shone full on him, and far down into the black mouth of the gorge, into which a single misstep, the crumbling of a piece of bark under his feet, or even a side glance, would precipitate him to a certain death.

The young ranger could feel the swaying of the log under his weight and the vibration of each footfall; but with firm step he felt his way onward, and soon reached the foliage of the elm that hung down over the log. This he carefully pushed aside and passed beyond.

But at that instant he came to a sudden halt. A low cry escaped his lips. There, before him, on the center of the log, over the fearful depths of the abyss, he found himself face to face with a powerful Indian warrior—a deadly foe!

CHAPTER III. THE BATTLE IN THE AIR.

HAWKEYE HARRY was taken by surprise—the drooping foliage of the elm having concealed the savage from his view until he had drawn the screen aside. And the red-skin seemed as greatly surprised, for it was quite evident that he knew nothing of the young ranger's presence until the curtain of foliage was put aside.

Retreat, however, was impossible for either of the two natural enemies. They could not walk backward, nor could they turn about upon the narrow log. Even had such a thing been possible, it was not probable that either of them would have done so, for such foes never shrink nor turn from each other. That would have been a mark of cowardice and fear.

They stood glaring at each other, motionless as statues—like maddened beasts preparing to leap.

Each, with a quick glance, measured the proportions of the other, and a triumphant smile swept over the paint-bedaubed face of the savage, when he had comprehended how inferior was the young pale-face to himself. By his size had the warrior measured the young foe's strength and courage.

Hawkeye Harry well knew that he had a terrible enemy to deal with, and that his salvation lay in one desperate stroke. So he watched the warrior. He saw his right hand slowly and mechanically moving toward his girdle where his scalping-knife was sheathed. Not a moment was to be lost.

Quick as a flash of lightning, Harry permitted his feet to slip apart, and dropped himself aside of the log, locking his feet on the under side of the log. No sooner had he done this than the savage warrior followed, his example and dropped himself astride of the log.

They were now seated upon the fallen tree over the abyss within arm's length of each other.

Without waiting to draw his knife, Hawkeye Harry drove his clenched fist into the red-skin's face with such force as to make him yell with pain and rage, as he drew his knife and made a desperate pass at his young adversary; but he had reckoned without his host. With great presence of mind, Harry caught the descending arm with his left hand, while, with his right, he dealt the savage a blow in the stomach that caused him to drop his knife in the abyss; but, quick as lightning, he reached forward and they grasped each other in a deadly embrace.

What a struggle for life ensued there, over the awful depths of the Black Gorge! The slender log swayed and creaked beneath their struggling forms, threatening to snap in twain and hurl both combatants down into the blackness, fifty feet below.

To and fro they swayed—striking, struggling and writhing like serpents. Still they kept their legs clasped about the log like bands of steel, but at last they lost their equilibrium and turned completely over upon the log! Their situation was now indeed perilous. With their feet locked over the top of the log and their bodies dangling below, they struggled and fought on more desperately than before.

Under any other circumstances it would have required a superhuman strength and courage to have maintained even for a brief time the awful position, without contending with a foe; but desperation lent them strength.

The savage succeeded in entwining his muscular arms around the form of our hero, and then made a desperate effort to crush the life from the young body. But the youth had managed to seize the warrior by the scalp-lock, and was thereby enabled to thrust his head backward until the crown touched between the shoulders.

Half-strangled, the red-skin loosened his hold upon the youth's body, and becoming dizzy and faint, with a determined effort to drag the youth down into the abyss with him, he clutched the lad with both hands by the throat, as his feet slipped apart; but unable to maintain the hold upon the throat, with a wild, despairing shriek, that echoed in prolonged wails through the gorge, the doomed wretch went whizzing down into the fearful abyss.

The young ranger had won the victory; he was free, but still hanging head downward over the black gulf. And now he realized his true peril, for he was far from being saved; his limbs were growing weak, and his head dizzy with the rush of blood to the brain. He attempted to draw himself up and to grasp the log with his hands, but the attempt proved a failure.

Then he feels a vibratory shock of the log. Great heavens! It is produced by a footstep, and no doubt that of another Indian! He sees a dark form upon the log outlined against the sky; he fixes his glaring eyes upon it!

Blessed sight! It was the form of Old Optic!

"Hold on to it, boyee, I'll help," cried the old trapper.

The next instant brave Harry was assisted from his awful position—saved!

"That was a ticklish place, Hawkeye," said the old trapper, as he assisted the youth along the log to the cliff.

"Yes," responded the young ranger, "and but for your timely arrival I should have gone down after the savage. How is it that you are here, Optic?"

"That very Injun war nosin' around the Cone arter ye left, and I took a notion to see him start for the diggin's below."

Despite his late excitement, Hawkeye Harry's mind reverted to the unknown avenger, whose voice so closely resembled that of Old Optic. He would have questioned the old trapper further, but the appearance of half a dozen shadowy figures on the opposite side of the gorge suggested the idea of a hasty retreat to the Cone; and not until they were safe within its walls, and the door barred, did they engage in further conversation.

Hawkeye Harry now gave a brief account of his night's adventures, in the meantime watching closely the expression of the old trapper's face; yet the youth said nothing of the similarity in his friend's voice to that of the Unknown.

"By snakes!" exclaimed the old trapper, when the youth had finished his story, "that's curious. We'll have to investigate the matter some o' these days."

"To-morrow," returned the young ranger, "I shall make a scout far beyond the big prairies to see how far these Indian devils are going. You know I promised the settlers over on the Raccoon that I would watch the Indians, and warn them if they were likely to be troubled."

"Yes, Hawkeye," added the old trapper, "we've got to look sharp. The varmints are thick and mean devils. If you take to the poratry, I'll look 'er the timber north o' us."

"Very well. I shall be off by sunrise. I will take my horse, so that, in case I find the reds are going toward the Raccoon settlement, I'll try and beat them there."

"That's you, lad, that's you!" responded Old Optic; "and now, if we mean to work to-morrow, we'd better turn into bunk, for the night's well spent."

After some preparation for the morrow, the two sought their couches and were soon asleep, trusting their safety to a faithful old slave that slept near the door on the outside of the Cone, and whose instinct was never at fault.

With the first streaks of the dawn the two were astir, and when their rude breakfast was cooked and eaten, their weapons cleaned and polished, Hawkeye Harry went outside of the Cone, and, placing a small bone whistle to his lips, he blew two or three shrill notes upon it.

In response to the call, a spirited brown horse—a cross of the mustang and new American stock—came galloping down the valley from among the shrubbery, where it had been grazing, and approached its young master.

"Now for a long, hard ride, my noble beast," said the youth, vaulting on to its back without saddle or bridle.

"Take care of yourself, old friend," Harry called to Old Optic; then, speaking to his horse, he was off like an arrow, dashing down the valley.

But, scarcely was he out of sight of the Cone, when the figure of an Indian, whose gaudy headgear and flashing ornaments bespoke distinction, emerged from the shadows of a clump of elders hard by and approached the hut.

At the door he was met by Old Optic, who received him with kindness and manifest pleasure, and ushered him into the Cone.

CHAPTER IV. THE PRAIRIE TRADERS.

THERE is a sublime grandeur in the great prairies of the North-west that inspires one with a feeling akin to that produced by gazing upon the billowy ocean. Yet there is a material difference in the impression left upon the mind by sight of the ocean and prairie. The sailor will become so accustomed to the one that after a while it fails to awaken more than a passing interest within his breast; but familiarity never lessens the majestic grandeur of the prairie beauty, tranquil repose and inspiring grandeur than in autumn, when Indian summer has thrown her misty veil over the landscape—when the air is delicious with balmy fragrance, and the plain seems to melt away in the distance like the visions of a dream.

The day was near its close—one of those balmy October days.

A youthful horseman, galloping westward over one of those prairie wastes, suddenly drew rein upon the crest of a gentle swell, and swept the plain around him with a gaze as quick and interrogative as that of a hawk. His face then lit up with a glow of admiration as he feasted his dark-gray eyes upon the great expanse that rolled away in its gorgeous coating of brown and emerald.

Hawkeye Harry had seen that plain before, but never had it appeared so grand as upon this autumnal evening.

The crest of each wave or undulation seemed gilded with burnished gold as the red beams of the setting sun streamed across it; while shadows of somber gray were gathering in the valleys and lengthening over the plain.

The great expanse was bounded upon three sides by the blue horizon, and upon the fourth by the dark belt of timber bordering the Boyer lake and river. It was diversified by small streams, that would like silver threads across its bosom, and here and there it was dotted with small mottes of timber—lands in that mighty sea of verdure.

Toward one of these mottes Hawkeye Harry turned his animal's head, and rode at a loping gallop.

Though no living object was visible, he knew he was in an Indian country, consequently he did not permit his vigilance to relax. As he approached the little clump of trees, he checked the speed of his horse to inspect the surroundings of the grove before venturing into it.

The shrill neigh of a horse coming from the depths of the grove startled him, and he drew rein and listened.

He could hear nothing more, but, above the tree-tops from the center of the grove, he saw a thin column of smoke slowly drifting heavenward.

Some one was in the grove, and a person unaccustomed to the signs and dangers of the prairie would have hesitated about advancing. But not so with Hawkeye Harry. He knew at once there were no Indians in the grove, but some one who was ignorant of the publicity he, or they, perhaps, were making of their location. All this he read in that column of blue smoke, and riding forward he soon entered the grove.

He was not a little surprised to see six white men, seated around a camp-fire, smoking and chatting with as little concern as though they were a thousand miles from an Indian! In the background stood a covered wagon. Its white tilt was drawn down in front and behind, and was securely fastened, thus making it impossible for our hero to see what it contained.

Near the vehicle a number of horses were hitched, and the marks upon them showed that they had just been released from the harness and saddle.

"Hullo!" exclaimed one of the men, as our hero drew rein before them, "who have we here?"

"A prairie freebooter," replied Hawkeye Harry, with a merry sparkle of the eyes. "Well, my young freebooter, you surely have some name inflicted upon you?" said the stranger.

"You can call me Harry—"

"Hawkeye Harry?" interrupted the man. "If you like," responded the young ranger.

"Sure! Comrades, we're in luck," exclaimed the man, turning to his friends; "this is the very scout that we've come over a day's travel out of the way to find."

"Good!" ejaculated his companions. "And I reckon it would be all right if I'd ask your name, wouldn't it?" inquired our hero.

"Certainly," replied the man; "my name is Henri Roche."

"That sounds a little Frenchy," said Harry, with a smile. "You are good at judging one's nationality by his name," returned Roche.

"I'm sure you speak the white man's language pat enough."

The strangers laughed at the remark. "I am a Frenchman only by birth," Roche finally returned. "I was raised in America among Americans, and know nothing of the French tongue; but will you not dismount? I would like to speak with you about the country, for I have learned that you can give the information we desire in regard to it."

Henri Roche was a tall, powerful-built man, with a complexion as swarthy as a Mexican's. His eyes were black, sharp and brilliant. His hair was long—sweeping his shoulders—and, like the heavy mustache that shaded a somewhat coarse or sensual mouth, was black as the raven's wing. He was dressed in a suit of gray cloth, high-topped boots, and a low-crowned, wide-brimmed hat. A handsome belt, bristling with knives and pistols, girded his waist, and, altogether, in his complexion, his features and dress, there was about him the air and general appearance of a Spanish Creole of the South.

His companions were dressed in a half-civilized, half-savage garb, and from appearances the young ranger would have pronounced them bordermen. But, from their presence there, under the circumstances, the tilted wagon, and the look of anxious suspense upon their bearded faces, and the strange light in their flashing eyes, Hawkeye Harry was inclined to doubt the honesty of their sojourning unmolested through the country.

He was too cautious and prudent to let any look or word betray his inward emotions of mistrust, but, prompted by curiosity, he accepted Roche's invitation to dismount, and resolved to remain with them during the night.

By this time the sun had sunk behind the western horizon, and having staked his animal at grass at the outskirts of the motte, Hawkeye Harry took a seat with the emigrants before the fire.

"I suppose, strangers," said Harry, "that you know you're in a dangerous country?"

"We know we are in the Indian country, but hope there are no Indians in the immediate vicinity," returned Roche. "Probably you can enlighten us in that respect."

"Well, the fact of it is," said Harry, "the red-skins are all around us. At this minute they may be miles from here, and by midnight be right onto us, cutting and slashing."

"And is there no other danger in this country, save that to be expected from the Indians?" asked Roche.

"Yes, there's them cursed white robbers under old Rat Rouble, that's worse on such things," pointing to the covered wagon, "than the red-skins. You see, old Rat and Co. are after plunder, not scalps, like the Greasy red-skins."

The men exchanged significant glances. And Hawkeye Harry was sure he detected a smile upon the bearded face of one of them.

"Well, I hope we will escape the minions of Rouble," said Henri, "for we have a very valuable load of merchandise, with which we want to cross beyond the Missouri river."

"Whew!" ejaculated Harry; "then you're prairie traders, are you?"

"Well—yes," returned Roche. "I suppose you would call us traders, although we have done no trading yet. Our load consists of cheap fabrics, knives, whiskey and beads. With these articles we want to reach the Pawnee country beyond the Missouri, and exchange them for furs, which we will boat down the river to St. Louis."

"Exactly," returned Harry; "but could you do just as well, and save time, by doing your trading with the Indians round about these diggings? Furs and peatry picking have been pretty rich this fall."

"We might do equally as well, if the Indians were at peace. However, we have started for the Pawnee country, and will endeavor to make it; and we want to employ you to guide us through this territory."

"Ah, the deuce you say!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes," replied Roche; "two days ago we lost our guide. He deserted us. At the first settlement we came to we tried to employ another, but failed. The settlers told us of Hawkeye Harry, and directed us by a course in which we might accidentally meet him. Fortune has favored us thus far, and now I hope you will consent to accompany us."

"To be plain with you," returned Harry, "I can't go."

"And why not, I pray?"

"I've a mission to perform, which I can't delay under any circumstances—it's imperative."

The traders seemed greatly disappointed, but, for some reason or other, Harry

could not believe it was real. There was an undercurrent in Henri Roche's conversation, as also in his very looks, that, boy that he was, Harry had a great curiosity to fathom.

"Well, well," said Roche, "this is quite a disappointment."

"I'm sorry," returned Harry, "but I can give you such directions as'll take you safe to the Missouri."

"That will do," exclaimed Henri Roche, drawing from an inner pocket a small memorandum and pencil; "here, can you give me an outline-map of the country and the rivers, lakes, and other geographical points between here and the Missouri river?"

"I reckon that I know all about the country, but I don't know about a map. I'm not very handy with a pencil—good with a rifle and scalping-knife, however; I'll try it."

Roche handed him the book and pencil. In a few minutes he had sketched a crude, but plainly correct map of the country to the westward of them, and passed it to Roche.

The traders examined it; then Roche, their leader, asked, pointing to the map: "What stream is this?"

"That's the Boyer river—not a very large stream; you can ford it anywhere within thirty miles of the Boyer lake. Indians are pretty thick for some ten miles south of the lake, and hunting-parties are to be found most anywhere along the river. You'll have to look sharp from this on. In this direction"—noting the course on the map—"there's a heavy belt of timber which extends to the Conon river. You want to keep out of that for old Rat Rouge has his ranche in there somewhere."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Roche, and he exchanged glances with his companions.

For a moment there was silence, during which Hawkeye Harry was sure he heard a deep sigh, which was almost a sob. It came from none of the party.

The eyes of the traders were fixed upon Harry with an interrogative expression.

Feigning ignorance of what he had heard, the youth continued:

"Yes, old Rat and gang are in that timber, but you can keep ten miles south of that on the open prairie, and may have no trouble. However, as it's about dark now, you'd better put this fire out, or its light might draw the prowling red-skins onto us, when the consequence would be a draw on our hair. To-morrow morning I'll give you further directions."

In compliance with the suggestion, the fire was extinguished.

Then the traders went to see that their horses were secure for the night. Harry did likewise, and on his way back to camp, he stopped under a wild plum-bush that was laden with ripened fruit. Plucking a handful of the luscious, yellow plums, and producing a slice of dried venison, he made a sumptuous meal thereon. Then he rejoined the traders at the camp.

"What think you, Hawkeye—had we better post guards over camp to-night?" asked Roche.

"By all means," replied Harry, "the red-skins may strike your wagon-trail and follow you up. As there's most danger after midnight, I'll agree to keep watch then."

The traders readily acquiesced in this, and two of their number went on guard. The other four, and Hawkeye Harry, seated themselves near the wagon, and conversed for some time on various topics.

Presently they grew sleepy, and, wrapping their blankets around them, each one sought the most comfortable spot for a bed that the hard earth would afford.

Hawkeye Harry laid down under the wagon, with his head in the hollow of a saddle. Roche was the nearest one of the traders to him, and he was over a rod away.

Our hero did not go to sleep—in fact, it was not his intention to let slumber close his eyes, until he had made sure of the contents of the covered wagon!

He noticed that Roche lay with his face directly toward him, and for a while he feared the trader had suspected his intentions.

Had he taken a second thought, the youth would have selected a different spot for a couch, so there would have been no grounds by which to suspect his purpose. But if he was suspected at all, it was too late now to make amends. However, his mind was soon set at ease. As the minutes passed by, the heavy and regular respiration of the travel-worn traders told him that they slept, and that their sleep was sound. Then Harry crept to the rear of the wagon and arose on his feet.

The moon was in the zenith, and it so happened that its rays fell full upon the wagon. This enabled him to see that the thick canvas cover was so securely tacked to the wagon-box that there was no possible chance of seeing in. The flap in front was drawn down and fastened in a manner similar to the sides.

Hawkeye Harry was not to be defeated in this manner; so, drawing his knife, he inserted its point under the head of a tack with the intention of prying it out so that he would be enabled to lift the cover. But the instant he touched the knife to the wagon-box, he became motionless, for a vibratory shock was communicated to his arm from the knife. The latter had received the shock from the box; but what had produced it?

Hawkeye Harry pressed his ear close against the cover and listened.

He started. It was all he could do to restrain an exclamation of surprise.

There was life within that wagon! He could hear the low, quick breathing of either a human or a beast.

Becoming impatient and uneasy, he cut a slit in the canvas cover, and applied his ear to it.

There was no mistaking the evidence of his hearing now. A living creature was within that wagon, and having, from experience, learned to discriminate between the breathing of a human and a beast, he knew it was a human being within the wagon.

The respirations were short and quick, broken now and then with a sigh—a woman's sigh!

There was no doubt of this.

(To be continued.)

A NURSERY maid was leading a little child up and down a garden. "Is't a laddie or a lassie?" asked the gardener. "A laddie," said the maid. "Weel," said he, "I'm glad of that, for there's ower many women in the world." "Hech, man," said Jess, "did you no ken there's maist sawn of the best crap?"—Dean Ramsay.

Hercules, the Hunchback:

The Fire-Fiends of Chicago.

A REVELATION OF THE GREAT CONFLAGRATION.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "PLANNING TALESMAN," "HOODWINKED," "BLACK CRESCENT," "BLACK HAND," ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

A POE ON THE DOOR-STEP.

THE appearance of Hercules on the scene of confusion, when through a miraculous Providence, which guided Zone thither—Mortimer Gascon escaped injury, perhaps death, was a source of courage to the invalid, and a fortunate occurrence for the frail girl, who was seeking to extricate herself, with the cumbersome push-cart, from the jostling, frantic crowd.

"God be thanked!" uttered Gascon; and an exclamation of like fervency fell from Zone's lips.

"Where is Lu?" repeated the Hunchback, as they were compelled onward in the shouting, hallooing, surging mass.

"I have not seen her to-night," Zone answered.

"She was with me only a short while ago," said Gascon, faintly; "and employed a boy to push this cart along. But, we got separated, and the boy deserted me. She was hurt, I think."

"Hurt?"

"Yes. I saw blood upon her neck."

"Hail—say you so?" Hercules thought of what the negress had told him—the recent appearance of Jose and Miguel at her home, and the theft of the child; and as he at once suspected them to be the authors of her hurt—he inwardly vowed a double vengeance on the two Spaniards.

"Here—this way. Follow me," he commanded Zone, as he whirled the cart into a side street, and hastened northward, where there was less to obstruct his progress.

"He has fainted!" whispered Zone, presently.

And it was so. Mortimer Gascon's weak condition was a prey, at last, to the excitement which had threatened to rob him of his senses every moment since the terrible ordeal in the burning house, and he lay insensible in the bottom of the conveyance.

"This will not do! He must be revived. Ho, there! woman, a cup of water, quick, to save a life!" pausing near a doorway, where several females were huddled together.

One of these disappeared, and returned shortly, with the cool liquid.

Hercules bathed the brow and wrists of the unconscious man; and Gascon soon opened his eyes to life again.

"Bear up," said the Hunchback.

"Did I faint?" asked the invalid, bewilderedly.

"Yes. But you must keep your strength now; there is danger everywhere about us, and it is no time for faints. Well, what now, boy?—where's your tongue? Have you aught to say?—then speak it."

A paining, gaping, dirty-faced urchin had run up to him, and was now trying to catch breath enough to say something. It was the boy who had been employed by the negress to wheel Mortimer Gascon away from a dangerous vicinity.

"Say!" he blurted, "why, I'm sorry I left that 'ere mister by himself, an' I've come to see 'f I can't 'pologize for 't. I was close by you all, when I heard you askin' the girl there where 'Lu' was, an' I s'pose 'Lu' is the one 'at paid me to help 'er. I don't know where she is, but I can show you where it was about 'at I lost 'er, if you want me to."

Hercules interrupted him by turning quickly to the woman who had furnished the cup of water.

"Have you room for a man and girl in your house?—and I will pay you for it. Let them stop with you till I come back. It may not be for long."

She consented. The Hunchback bore Mortimer Gascon in, and laid him on a lounge.

"Poor man! was he hurt by a fall?" asked one of the women.

"See—he's been burnt, too!" exclaimed another.

"How did it happen?" questioned the third of the trio.

But Hercules paid them no heed. Leaving Zone to care for their charge, he slipped a note into the boy's hand and bade him lead on.

They hurried off, back over the course they had come by—with the exception that, instead of trying to force their way against the pouring current of humans on Randolph street, they pursued a roundabout way.

Soon they were on the spot where the boy had seen Lu halt and gaze at the man in the doorway.

"Here's the place, mister," said the boy, halting, and explaining what he had seen.

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am. Now, I can't do no more, and with this the ragged lad darted off out of sight, adding to himself: "My, what an ugly feller!"

Hercules glanced up at the silent, spectral-shadowed house before which he stood. The locality was rather a deserted one; and in the demi-solitude—where the murmuring din of the night sounded strangely in his ears—he paused to wonder if Lu was in that house, what had brought her there, and what he should do.

"We must not be separated," he resolved; "and if she is here, I will bring her out."

He advanced boldly, and pulled the bell. As he did so, he heard a disturbance at the rear of the house—pistol-shot, the fierce snarling and snapping of a dog, accompanied by a cry from human lips.

A hard struggle of some kind was going on.

His first impulse was to hasten around to the rear, to ascertain what was transpiring, what those sounds of conflict meant; but, while standing irresolute, a window in the second story was thrown open, and a head thrust out.

"Who's there?" demanded a blunt voice. The tone was snappish, the speaker ill-humored.

"One who would enter," replied the Hunchback, equally as sharp.

"And what do you want, eh?"

"Admittance."

"Begone, whoever you are; I am busy."

"I will see the inside of this house. So, open the door, or it goes down," growled back Hercules, who saw that he was dealing with a spiteful.

The noise of combat at the rear was still kept up; only, the dog was now howling between snarls, as if it was getting worsted by an antagonist.

The head at the window disappeared, and the sash fell with a whack that shivered some of its glass.

"Something is wrong," he muttered; "else what means that racket?—Ho, there! open the door, I say," and he thumped impatiently on the panel.

Pretty soon a pair of clumsy feet came shuffling over the entry oilcloth, and, in another moment, the door swung back on its hinges.

"Who and what are you, that you dare to threaten the house of a peaceable female?" cried the Indian woman, harshly, as Hercules placed one foot on the sill, and started to enter.

But he paused. Just then a faint, boyish voice uttered a cry behind him—a wild appeal, such as one will send up when in peril from a dreaded source.

CHAPTER XX.

STIMULATING PROSPECTS.

WE have said that Jack Willis was a small man. That the reader may form some positive idea of his diminutive anatomy, let us look after him, and explain his disappearance from the cellar, to which he had accidentally consigned himself.

When the trap fell, and he was precipitated downward, the one thought that flashed into his mind was that he would be instantaneously killed.

But he alighted squarely on his feet—unhurt, save in experiencing a disagreeable jolt.

His fertile brain immediately prompted him to dissemble mortal injury—which he did, by groaning at a fearful rate, as we have seen.

In the same brilliant turn of mind, he resolved upon hiding in the candle-boxes, which were dimly discernible in the light that came from above.

One end was knocked out of each of these in a trice; he stood one against the wall, and drew the other over him, resting the two demolished ends together; and within this cramped compass—hardly more than sufficient to secrete the form of a child—he managed to pack his short, slim body away—twining his legs together, and winding his arms spirally around himself.

Then, through a crack, he saw the lamp descend by means of the string; saw three pairs of eyes turned anxiously in search of him; and while he viewed the three dark, wandering faces, an inward chuckle caused his mouth to pucker as he thought:

"Three big Tom-cats fooled by a little rat!"

But, when the trap was raised up and secured, and he ventured, with aching limbs, from his concealment, he stood still, in the impenetrable murk, to ask himself:

"What next?"

He heard the trio leave the parlor; and in the deep silence that ensued, he pondered perplexedly over his dismal situation.

"Jack Willis, you're caught!" he exclaimed, half-aloud, while he smoothed his nose with thumb and finger. "I wonder what Evard Greville will think of my keeping him waiting so long? I wonder where that Della Kivens is?—where those humans have done with her? And I wonder how I'm going to get out of this! Lord! what a hole. They'll leave me here to starve—no doubt of it. Starve! ugh! that's a horrible death! I'd rather be drowned!"

He groped cautiously around, feeling carefully every step.

"If there's a well here, I'll go down some more. And that'll be the end of John Willis, Esq., he muttered, running his hands over the damp, cold walls.

Presently he felt bricks, and he stopped still.

"Now, what's this?" he asked himself. "Before I came into the infernal dwelling, I noticed that it must have a long cellar. Here it is not over twelve feet from wall to wall; and, unless I'm considerably knocked out of geographical calculation, this is the back. What do they have stone foundations on three sides, and brick on the other for, eh? Singular, that. And here's only half the cellar of a thirty-foot deep house!" His foot caught something which slid, scraping, over the earthen floor.

Stooping, and picking the article up, he was elated on discovering it to be his revolver.

"Four barrels loaded, yet, too!" he exclaimed. "Now, you old hag!—and you hawk-faced villains!—if you show the point of an eyebrow, I'll send the headache into you, by gosh!"

He pounced against the bricks with his weapon, evidently searching for some sign of a weak place; for, almost involuntarily, he determined that his only chance of escape lay in this direction.

It was with an indescribable thrill that he started on hearing a responsive knock upon the other side.

He struck the bricks again; and again came the answering sound.

"Hello!" he cried.

"Who's there?" was the questioning reply, faintly audible.

"Me! Jack Willis! Detective! Who are you?" he shouted and asked at once.

But, instead of an answer, Willis detected a scratching, digging, thumping noise at his feet, and he listened in part astonishment.

This strange proceeding continued for some time; then he leaped backward with a squeal—for he felt something wriggling about his limbs, which presently laid hold upon him.

"What the devil—" he began, as he hopped on one foot, and tugged to release the other; but his voice interrupted him—a voice that seemed within the same apartment.

"What are you doing there?"

"What are you doing there? Let go my leg!" and when he was freed, he said, while he felt down to the ground, expecting to grasp some one:

"I'm a prisoner. Pretty near killed by a flock of vultures. Who are you?"

"A prisoner, like yourself. We must help each other."

"The deuce! I've got into a private penitentiary! But where are you?" groping vainly to lay hands upon the speaker.

"I am on the other side of the wall. These bricks do not belong here. Whoever built them up was a fool at making prisons. They are out upon the ground—without depth. See—I have scraped through, and just now I had you by the foot. Escape is easy."

"O-h!" was the prolonged, half-whispered exclamation of the detective.

Then he added:

"That's all very fine! But, I say—have you got a bettering-iron or a pickaxe handy?—else we can't get out."

"Yes, we can. See this"—wrenching at one of the lower bricks. "The mortar is not dry, and, with patience, we can make an opening."

"O-h!" he exclaimed again.

Willis moved one hand over the bottom of the wall, and, after a moment, grasped a projecting brick, which the other had partially kicked out toward him. In a few seconds this was removed, and the two went to work ardently.

"Careful, there!—you'll skin my knuckles!" cried Jack, as a heavy foot-struck his fingers and made him jump with pain.

It was slow work; but it was certain, and the incentive was all-powerful.

Occasionally they paused in their labors, to ascertain whether their enemies had discovered what they were at. But all was still overhead.

When at last the detective crawled through and arose to his feet, he could hardly suppress a groan; for he was still enveloped in darkness, and he believed himself as badly off as ever.

He knew that his partner in difficulty was a woman. He had touched her dress as she assisted him through the hole they had made.

"Can you fight?" she asked, guardedly.

"Fight! Madam, I'm a whole regiment of rifles when I go off!"

"Come, then. We have a wicked foe to deal with."

"Lead the way. We'll demolish the individual on short notice."

"It's not a man," she interrupted.

"Is not a man?"

"She drew him up the ladder-steps, then paused and whispered:

"Do you hear?"

"Yes. What's that, now?"

The huge dog owned by the Indian crone, and which had not got over its disappointment at the escape of the negress, now lay with its nose close to the cellar door, breathing an occasional growl, and on the watch for the reappearance of the one who, his instinct told him, was an enemy to his mistress.

"A big 't-r-r-r!" said Jack, cooking his revolver and bracing himself for the encounter. "Come on—if he gets a chance at me, hope I may die!"

Simultaneously they sprang up the steps.

CHAPTER XXI.

A MURDERER CHEATED.

"Rap! rap! rap! rap! rap!" came a repetition of the summons at the front door of Evard Greville's house; and quicker than the raps palpitated the heart of the desperate man, as he stood listening, waiting, defiant, in the stillness which succeeded the demand for admittance.

Then there was another sound.

Impatient at the delay, and seeming resolved upon an entrance, those on the outside began to force the door, throwing themselves against it, while the quick thud of a heavy timber made the barrier tremble.

He glanced at the form of the child. Not a motion was perceptible.

Then he altered his mind, for he left the lounge, evidently going to meet these unexpected, unwelcome intruders.

"Curse their interference!" he muttered, as he hurriedly descended the stairs; "who can it be?"

But he paused with a new thought.

"It will never do for the child to be discovered—a dead child. That would ruin all. And mayhap it was his last cry that has brought them. Ay, hammer away, you fools!"—the last as the demonstrations of the impatient parties redoubled.

"Let them wear themselves out"—retracing his steps—"it will take them some time to get in; and when they do succeed, there will be no danger. I can easily hide the body."

He was right in judging it to be the boy's cry for help that had drawn the now angry men to his house; the loud shriek had reached them as they were hurrying past, and there was no mistaking its import. They instantly concluded that a foul deed of some kind was being done inside the large dwelling—and a brave man never hesitates to answer an appeal for help.

Evard Greville re-entered the library. But he uttered an exclamation of astonishment. Little Carl was gone.

At the same instant of this discovery, there was a crash in the hall below, followed by the tramp of numerous feet.

"This way!" ordered a gruff voice; "there's certainly something ornamental agoin' on, for I heard some one yell 'murder'! I know—a woman, I think!"

Under an impulse, Greville rushed to the window and looked out.

By the light of the great conflagration to eastward, he saw that which well might draw a fierce oath from his lips.

At the far side of the garden, where a thickly overgrown grape-rack reached above the vine-clad wall, the figure of a boy was climbing upward, looking back over his shoulder as he climbed, and grasping the frail support with trembling, nervous hands.

The little fellow was not unconscious, as Greville imagined him to be, when the latter went from the library; and the moment he was alone, he sprang to the window, thence to the overhanging eaves of the tree before mentioned, and made his way to the ground, with remarkable agility—stimulated to the daring feat by the intense peril of his situation.

Greville recognized him; but he did not think then of the tree and its facilities.

The distance to the ground was great; yet, he recked not the hazard. He only saw his intended victim escaping; and while his hitherto pale face reddened in a new excitement, he poised himself, for a second, on the sill—then took the dangerous leap.

As he shot out into the air, three men entered the library on a half-run, and just caught sight of his vanishing form.

"Told you so!" exclaimed one, as all three ran to the window and peered downward.

"See!—there's a broken neck!"

A still shapely on the eaves below; but no sound or sight, save this, greeted their eyes of the three men.

They hastened out to the garden.

Greville was lying insensible—having miscalculated the balance of his spring, and fallen with a force that deprived him of consciousness.

He was borne into the parlor and laid upon a lounge, where cold water was used freely on his pallid brow.

With the first return of life, his wits were paramount—he remembered every thing; and an apt story answered the eager inquiries of the three men.

"You were just in time," he said, simulating more weakness than he really felt. "I was attacked by two ruffians, who en-

tered my house from a passing crowd. Their object was plunder."

"Told you so, didn't I?" exclaimed the owner of the gruff voice, nodding to his companions.

"I resisted," continued Greville, "and they dragged me to the library. But for your arrival, I would have been killed, I fear."

"Which way did they go?"

"I can not say. Even while you were knocking at the door, they were strangling me."

"The rascals!"

"And when you forced your way in, I managed to escape them. I jumped from the window—the rest you know. Did you meet no one as you came in?"

"No."

"Then they got off?"

"Are you hurt much?"

"Not much; but my two ankles pain me a little." He spoke the truth in this, for his ankles were sore and aching.

The men soon left him, readjusting the demolished front door in the best way they could, and firmly believing the he imposed upon them.

Once alone, the villain staid up.

Despite his weakness, his pained ankles, the severe shock upon his nerves, he paced to and fro, fuming, muttering, scowling, clinching his fists, and gulping down enormous quantities of liquor from a decanter.

"Curses! Curses! Curses on my fate! Satan is leagued against me! If that boy lives, then the Evard Greville who now rolls in wealth, will eventually be exposed, be dragged to disgrace—by whom? Ay, who will it be? Jose Moreno—would he were dead!—would I had not left my work half-done, when I sought to rid myself of the man who knew my game!—he will find him again and hold him, like a sword, over my head! That Spaniard is the very devil at cunning! But, stop—did I not shoot him in the tunnel? Mayhap the wound will prove his death—I pray for it! O-h!"—grinding his teeth in savage thought—"this is a nice state of affairs! And where is Hermoine?—where is Zone?—who was it that rammed me in the dark? This night has been enough to drive me mad!" He stood in the middle of the room, rocking, swaying from foot to foot, with arms folded, hands patting nervously on the elbow, eyes starting as they bent upon the carpet, and the lower of an angered spirit traced in his dark-knit brows.

And while the defeated wretch was brooding over his strait, Carl was racing away through the streets—he knew not, cared not whether, so long as he escaped from the large house, where a demon, in the guise of a man, had striven to smother out his young life.

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A New Contributor whose enchanting pen will be devoted exclusively to our service. Noted as a soldier and adventurer in many lands, the gallant author is, as this fine story will show, equally at home with sword and pen. It is a romance of a chivalrous age, in which chivalrous men play at arms and high emprise for the noble stake of a grandly beautiful woman's love—a true love story, but so alive with the action of stirring deeds and strife against odds, that a truly great character becomes greater.

Our Arm-Chair.

The Coming Tidal Wave.—Not the great, ocean swell, whose mountain range of water deluges the land with one mighty rush, but the human tidal wave which is now coming in daily upon our sea-coast shores. The carrying capacities of all the ocean steamers are now taxed to their utmost, to bear hither, from the Old World, the people of all classes and ages who are eager to try their fortunes in this Heaven-blessed country. In portions of Germany the exodus is alarming to the Home Government—whole villages being almost depopulated! The dread of renewed war with France has something to do with this, but the desire to participate in our prosperity is the strongest motive, and we may expect an influx of the people from the whole of western Europe that will be unprecedented in the annals of history. Those now coming are, almost uniformly, well-to-do artisans, farmers and laborers, who, going, as they do, to the Western and Southern States, will add immensely to our agricultural and commercial prosperity. So, let them come! Give them welcome! and, as we have been blest in peace and plenty, so may others enjoy the bountiful blessings of this favored land!

The Arena Life.—A correspondent, who says he is an amateur acrobat, asks advice as to following the circus arena. We can not answer fully as to the inducements of such a calling, but are informed, as to pay, that first-class acrobats and gymnasts receive \$75 to \$100 a week and their expenses for the traveling season. First-class riders, both men and women, receive from \$50 to \$75 a week and expenses (board and traveling expenses); good riders from \$75 to \$100. Ordinary riders and gymnasts, who are not "starred" in the bills, get \$25 to \$30 per week. Star equestrians, like James Melville, James Robinson, and Robert Stickney, are paid \$500 to \$1,200 a month for personal services. They also receive a large sum for their trained horses, and in the case of Melville and Robinson, for the performances of their children. Some of these performers are thrifty and become rich. Pentland, lately the clown at the Fourteenth street (New York) Circus, owns several valuable houses in New York and Brooklyn. Melville, the Australian rider, lives in a house of his own in Thirty-fourth street, and owns others in Sixth avenue. James Robinson is well off, and now has a circus of his own. Many others also have

made fortunes and lost them by investing in the same precarious business.

These figures seem promising enough, but, as in all professions, they are the exception, not the rule. The calling is exceedingly arduous and hazardous, and ought not to be attempted by any save those of perfect health and great activity.

All the World Akin!—To show how all the world is akin, we have the contributions to Chicago, which are now announced as closed. New York State leads in the amount given, viz.: \$624,571, and next to her stands England, viz.: \$386,420. Who shall say, now, that Great Britain is our foe? Massachusetts gave \$335,530; Pennsylvania, \$175,094; Maryland, \$173,708; California, \$159,363; New Jersey, \$147,110; Connecticut, \$100,344; the Territory of the District of Columbia, \$134,337; Ohio, \$66,157; Indiana, \$35,314; Illinois, \$43,076; Rhode Island, \$66,915; Tennessee, \$33,830; Michigan, \$33,185; and so the record runs. Noble evidences of Man's humanity to Man! Truly the world's heart is a good heart, after all.

MOTHER-IN-LAW.

I GRIEVE that I must take my pen to say a word about the above-named females. Why are there so many lances hurled at these personages? For the simple reason that, nine cases out of the ten, they deserve it. It is their domineering spirit that causes so much unhappiness in the domestic circle. They do not have pleasure enough in finding fault with themselves, but often vent their spleen on their son's wife or daughter's husband. The daughter-in-law wants new paper put on the parlor—then the mother-in-law comes out with a tirade about people not considering how expensive things are, and the fear that John has got an extravagant wife, who will ruin him with her prodigality. Maybe she'll like a new dress. Of course there is no need of it, and it is wicked to think of such things. Poor John's farm will have to be mortgaged, yet, if her own daughter has a new garment, it is perfectly right, and "the dear knows she's wanted one badly enough."

If the daughter-in-law, whom we will call Mary, wants John to stay home a little while after dinner, and play with the children, how the hands of mother-in-law go up in horror and amazement. "What! make John leave his haying for a quarter of an hour to attend to such foolishness? Play with them yourself, Mary! Was it for this I brought John up? Little did I think when I nursed him, that he'd marry a woman who would bring him to the poor-house!"

Mary may want to go to a concert or an entertainment. "A whole quarter of a dollar to be wasted in wasteful extravagance! Why I never spent a cent for an amusement of any kind!" which accounts for knowing so little.

Don't you consider such speeches galling? Don't they make you feel like biting your finger-nails, and saying naughty words? It sounds like downright tyranny to a woman, who has been used to gaining her own livelihood and using her money as she wished, without having visions of mortgaged farms and poor-houses staring her in the face at the mere mention of wishing to use a cent. Such things said to me would make me almost wish myself in the grave and leaving directions to have engraved upon my tombstone, "Died of an overdose of mother-in-law."

But with the daughter—if she desires a new cow and her husband says he can not afford it, Mrs. Mother-in-law sounds a different alarm. "William is a miserly, mean man; I never thought I should live to see the day that a child of mine should be refused a rag to her back by her husband. She, who had every thing that heart could wish when she was single!"

If William doesn't take much notice of his children, of course he is dead to all feelings of affection, and his mind is fuller of money than love.

Now, mothers-in-law, why in the name of patience can't you think as well of others as of your own brood? And, if you can't be happy yourselves, don't carry discord into otherwise happy homes, and make the inmates miserable by your continual meddling and fault-finding. Other folks' "bairns" are as good as your own, and sometimes better; then why try to worry their lives out, as you do? If I ever get to be a mother-in-law, I am going to learn all their bad traits, and then act exactly as they do not. EVE LAWLESS.

SELF-MADE MARTYRS.

MUCH ado is made, nowadays, over our "Self-made Men." Scarcely a day passes without some one being proclaimed a "self-made man," and the title is given to those upon the top to push down the ladder by which they clambered up; so, until a generation or two stands firm enough to claim place among the "good old families," our inflated commoner and would-be aristocrat (we do recognize such distinctions in our republic) must cling to the solid base he has established of his own individual effort.

Not many, gazing up at his enviable height, consider how giddy the unaccustomed head must grow sometimes. It is one thing to be born in a certain sphere, and another thing to attain it from a lower station; as our self-made man most frequently merges into a self-made martyr, when, being in Rome he tries to act as Romans do.

His greatest trials are the receptions given in his own honor. Bonds and stocks always will command an abundance of respect, and when typified in an unassuming individual are apt to overtop their representative. But the credulous man never knows it. He thinks that the multitude, figuratively, go down upon their knees to do honor to his own successful struggle, while it is only the golden image he has gained possession of that commands their reverence. But, that doesn't save him the discomfort of embarrassing attentions.

P. Ed. Igree, of Uppertendom, unfortunately falls into arrears and anticipates that the substantial aid of the self-made man may be of essential benefit to him. So the latter receives a square of Bristol-board some morning, inscribed with the P. Ed. Igree's compliments, requesting the pleasure of his own and his lady's presence on a certain date.

His "lady" was his wife, once upon a time. They were a very happy and humble pair when they lived in a suite of three rooms, up two pair, back; she answered readily enough to the homely name of "Sue," though she writes it Susette now. He used to think her very pretty in her neat print gown, "done up" by her own hands; but she has grown fat and fussy since that, and somehow the silks and satins, velvets

and laces, which he foots such immense bills for, fail to appear becoming as the old print always did.

He is apt to glance ruefully at these bristling squares, but then he knows he "owes a duty to society"—he is not likely to forget it with Susette to remind him.

So, the card of invitation is transferred into her hands, together with a blank check to be filled out at her inclination. He knows that she will appear gorgeous in velvet and point, and has a vague idea that she is a walking sign of his secure position in the financial world; he is proud of her in one sense, though he can't help wishing her delicate kids wouldn't burst so in the seams, and that the massive arm would not look coarse and red where the bracelet clasps it.

He is nervous, too; for, while his own short-comings are kindly overlooked, or set down to the eccentricity of genius, or to the disadvantages of a business life, he knows that no such leniency extends to her. He understands that the dames who are so impressively deferential—who envy her the rich velvet and point—who come regularly to drink her rare wines and to eat her costly comfits—are sneering, *sub rosa*, at the general good-nature which will never tell itself into the refined assurance of polished hypocrisy.

Of course such unlooked-for condescension on the part of the P. Ed. Igree of Uppertendom is not without its desired effect, and when P. button-holes him upon the street, asking him to dine at the club, and there incidentally remarks that he has negligently left banking-hours pass—"confounded bore to be short for a paltry thousand or so"—our self-made man delicately slips the mentioned amount into the other's hand, considerably begging him never to refer to P. in his observance of the request.

It is hard to imagine keener agony than our martyr suffers in his own household. He is so ridiculously fearful that the servants will discover his lack of gentle breeding; but is still so much in awe of them that Susette is in the habit of tramping his corns to prevent him saying "please" to the waiter.

Those three rooms up the two-pair back, look like a lost haven of bliss in the dim distance. He doesn't dare to sigh for them, for that would be base ingratitude to the gracious hand of fellowship after he has fairly scaled the heights.

Ambition to rise may be laudable enough, but, isn't there such a thing as accomplishing more than we are fitted for? The trouble is that the poor victim's crown of martyrdom is more mirth-provoking than sympathetic, so prone are we to take the ludicrous side of serious matters in this our day. J. D. B.

Foolscap Papers.

My Professions.

I HAVE followed many professions in my lifetime. About my first profession was a profession of love to a very young miss. I told her I would be willing to die for her; she told me she would be very glad if I would do so immediately. As that profession didn't look like it would pay, I abandoned it.

Then I professed Dentistry. As I was horribly handsome, there was a great rush of young ladies to have their teeth pulled; some even went so far as to have the teeth pulled out of their combs, for which I charged fifty cents apiece, and no growing.

A man once came up with the toothache and wanted tooth pulled; said he didn't know which one it was, but that I ought to know. I told him I thought I could get the right one. Took hold of one at a guess; tooth wouldn't come; jerked him out of the chair; hauled him all around the room; held him out of a window and shook him; tooth came, he went; struck the sidewalk without cause or provocation. Coroner got out a *habes corpus* and arrested the jury, brought in a verdict against me for willful suicide, with intent to kill; admitted me on bail; told me they would give me twenty days to quit the business, or they would give me twenty days on bread and water. Concluded to let people's teeth ache.

I next went to doctoring; had a good many cases to treat, among them some extremely hard cases. Some of my creditors said I treated them shamefully. Some of my friends said I didn't treat them often enough. Used the bread pill in desperate cases, but, as it is written "Thou shalt not live by bread alone," some of my patients died. Most of my patients (as I was very methodical) were classified off into lots—in the cemetery. Legislature passed a resolution to send me against the rebellious Indians, asserting that I would soon lay low every one of them. People bought all my medicines for rats, and I quit in disgust.

Seamanship was one of my professions. I was Rear Admiral on a tug that blew up in New York Bay, and experienced my first drowning sensations. I felt a kind of sinking feeling when I was going down; didn't seem to care a cent for the five-dollar bill I had in my pocket; felt it was all up with me before I got clear down; experienced a terrible closeness of the air down there; much difficulty in breathing. Then two or three sines of my life rose up before me. I dreadfully regretted a weak moment in my life when I had been induced to tell a story about something or other. I mourned the time I came pretty near not being honest in a trade; but, when I recalled the fact that I had once given an old pair of slippers, on a winter day, to a starving, wooden-legged beggar, a feeling of tranquillity came over me, and I took a comb out of my pocket and smoothed my hair. It was very salty down there, and not much air stirring. It seemed like I had lain there a week, but I don't think it was more than two hours, when I opened my eyes and saw a baited fish-hook hanging very close above my head. Somebody was fishing. A sudden thought seized me; I seized the hook and gave a big jerk. The man thought he had got a whaling bite, and pulled like a mule kicking. When he got me to the top he thought he had caught a mermaid sure, and fainted and fell back in his boat.

I have never been drowned since, I will give you my word for it, but I'd rather be drowned in a dry mill-pond than in a wet one.

I opened a school to instruct a class of young men in the delightful and extremely popular science of getting along in this world without paying any thing. My class was very large, and progressed so well that at the end of the term they all went off and failed to pay me.

When I was out among the Digger In-

dians, lecturing to that noble tribe on the pleasing topic of Phrenology, they took a phrenologic notion just after one of my lectures to have my scalp, but wanted to cut it a little too thick—just under my chin. I objected, and a terrible fight ensued, in which I took the leading part. It was the most exciting chase that ever I participated in. I went over more ground than all my lectures put together covered, under the apprehension of coming to a conclusion which I didn't like. I went so fast that it seemed like there was a hurricane blowing, although it was a calm day. When they fired their rifles after me, the balls would keep along after me for a long distance, but could never catch up with me. Every jump I made was thirty-two feet in the clear, but I made my escape.

When I followed sculpturing I would frequently carve a man's statue out of a piece of marble so perfect as to create confusion—the statue would walk off, and the man would take its place and never find it out.

On account of my well-known bravery I was elected a professor in a military institute. We had a battery of wooden cannon, with which I taught the boys how to take a battery of any number of guns in an engagement, single-handed. I made each one take a saber, march boldly up, adjust his necktie rightly, cut the captain's head off, run the lieutenant through the body, cut off both the sergeant's arms, kill each one of the gunners separately, stop awhile to see if any more of the enemy would come up, then take the cannon under his arm, and walk away with it, whistling Yankee Doodle. I taught each boy this maneuver, so that, in the next war we have with England, it will be perfectly useless for her to send cannon over here.

When I was Professor of Natural Science and Belles-lettres I discovered that cold weather was caused in a great measure by the absence of those ingredients which, in conformity with the laws of nature, are vitally necessary to make it warm, and not wholly to the invention of thermometers, as some philosophers assert. I also discovered that heat was nothing more than air with the cold extracted from it. Rains I found were caused by making too great preparations for picnics; and grass, I discovered, grew green because it was more natural than any other color, and looks nicer to the eye.

But the profession which I had adhered the longest to is the profession of a gentleman. I know that I am one, for I have compared myself with some of my neighbors and seen what a great contrast there is. I had no idea I was so much of a gentleman before. It quite surprised me. But I have never made any money by it, and wouldn't urge any of my friends to follow it exclusively for a livelihood. It is a principle which, in this modern age, most men hang up on a hook next to their new coat, and only take down when they take the coat down. WASHINGTON WHITEHORN.

REFINEMENT OF LANGUAGE.

AMONG the improvements of the age, none, perhaps, are more striking than those which have recently been made, and, indeed, are at present making, in the language of ordinary life. Who in these days ever reads of boarding-schools? Nobody. They are transformed into academies for boys, and seminaries for girls; the higher classes are "establishments." A coach-maker's shop is a "repository for carriages;" a milliner's shop is a "depot." One buys drugs at a "medical hall;" wines of a "company;" and shoes at a "mart." Blacking is dispensed from an "institution," and meat from a "purveyor." One would suppose that the word shop had become not only contemptible, but had been discovered not to belong to the English language. Now all the shops are "ware-houses," or "places of business," and you will hardly find a tradesman having the honest hardihood to call himself a shop-keeper. There is now also no such word as tailor—that is to say, among speakers polite. "Clothing" has been discovered to be more elegant, although, for one part, the term tailor is every whit as respectable.

This new mode of paraphrasing the language of ordinary life, however ridiculous it may in some instances be, is not half so absurd as the newspaper fashion of using high-down terms in speaking of very common occurrences. For instance, instead of reading that after a ball the company did not go away till daylight, we are told that "the joyous groups continued tripping on the light fantastic toe until Sol gave them warning to depart." If one of the company happened on his way to tumble into a ditch, we should be informed that "his foot slipped, and he was immersed in the liquid element." A good supper is described as making the "tables groan with every delicacy of the season." A crowd at a watering-place is enumerated as "a host of fashion," where, we are also informed, that ladies, instead of taking a bath before breakfast, "plunge themselves fearlessly into the bosom of Neptune." A sheep or an ox killed by lightning, is a thing unheard of; the animal may be "destroyed by the electric fluid," but, even then, we should not be told that "the spark had fled forever." If the carcass were picked up by a carpenter or shoemaker, we never should hear that a journeyman tradesman had found it—we should be told that its remains had been discovered by an "operative artisan."

All little girls, betwixt their faces ever so plain, pitted or pitted, if they appear at a public office to complain of robbery or ill-treatment, are invariably "intelligent and interesting." If they have proceeded very far in crime they are called "unfortunate females." Child-murder is elegantly termed "infanticide," and when it is punished capitally, which is very seldom, we hear, not that the unfortunate mother was hanged, but that "the unfortunate culprit underwent the last sentence of the law, and was launched into eternity." No person now reads in the newspapers that a house had been burned down; he, perhaps, will find "that the house fell a sacrifice to the flames." In an account of a launch, not that the vessel went off the steps without any accident, but that "she glided smoothly and majestically to her native element," the said NATIVE element being one in which the said vessel never was before. To send for a surgeon, if one's leg is broken, is out of the question—a man may be "dispatched for medical aid." Actors are "professors of the histrionic art." Widows are scarce, they are all "interesting relics," and, as for nursery-maids, they are now transformed into "young persons who superintend the junior branches of the family."

Readers and Contributors.

TO CORRESPONDENTS AND AUTHORS.—No MSS. received that are not fully prepaid in postage.—No MSS. preserved for future orders.—Unavailable MSS. promptly returned only when accompanied by the inclosure, for such return.—Book MSS. postage is two cents for every four ounces, or fraction thereof, but must be marked Book MSS. and be sealed in wrappers with open end, in order to pass the night at the "Book rate."—No correspondence of any nature is permissible in a package marked as "Book MSS."—MSS. which are imperfect are not used or printed. In all cases our choice rests first upon merit or fitness, and secondly, upon excellence of MS. as copy. Thirdly, length of two MSS. of equal merit we always prefer the shorter.—Never write on both sides of a sheet. Use Commercial Note size paper is most convenient to edit and our position requiring of each page as it is written, and carefully giving it its full or page number.—A rejection by no means implies a want of merit. Many MSS. unavailable to us are most worthy of use.—All experienced and popular writers will find it ever ready to give their offices early attention.—Correspondents must look to this column for all information in regard to contributions. We can not write letters except in special cases.

We have no MS. reports to make this week. Authors must be patient. The great accumulation of contributions sometimes overwhelms even the most industrious of editors. We heartily thank our friends for their numerous remittances, from which to cull and make our paper bright and enjoyable.

Our contributor, Bartley T. Campbell, reserves the right to dramatize his own stories. He has agreed, if informed, sold the right to play his "Peril" to Miss Susan Denin, for all the territory beyond the Mississippi.

MORAVIA. Address E. Anthony & Co., N. Y., for the photographs named.—A falcon is a bird used to hunt flying game. It is still bred in the Orient for purposes of the hunt.

SPOT. There is no real cure for freckles. Several lotions and washes advertised will partially or temporarily remove them but not wholly eradicate them. Keep the face always well protected from the sun, and avoid hot winds. Rubbing the face at night with lemon-juice is as good a treatment as we can propose. As to your other ailment, wring the affected part tightly in cold water, and avoid forbidden things.

FREED. Yes, it is true that being married adds to the duration of life. Married men between the age of twenty-five and thirty-five are more apt to live than unmarried men, the ratio of deaths being in their favor, as four to ten and a half in every thousand persons.

MAXIM G. S. We never return MSS. at our own expense. If you want your MSS. preserved, send the stamps for its return. Remember that the postal rates on all MSS. (save books in manuscript) are full letter rates.

A SICKLE. Ask any druggist, both in reference to Rubarb and Soda and The University Medicines. A wash of borax, or of glycerine and carbolic soap is good for a "fatty" face. Chow-chow is as good and healthy as any strong pickle. We regard all such as injurious.

W. E. T. Sprinkle the nose twice daily with a weak solution of carbolic acid, of the same name. HERCULES, THE HUNCHBACK. No way so effective to cure a bad habit as to abandon it utterly. As to smoking it is a most injurious practice. The best way to be rid of it is to lessen the number of cigars per day.

W. L. M. The engagement ring is given by the man to the woman. It should be of plain solid gold, with his initials engraved on it.

CARLOS. Yes, Japan has ordered the decimalization of her coinage. This coinage is to be founded on the French metric system, which ought to prevail throughout the world. Its general adoption would immensely expedite business and knowledge, and it is one of the anomalies of our modern civilization that each nation has its own distinct system of weights, measures and terms.

PETER PENCE. Yes, Horace Greeley is a self-made man, but we are very much inclined to think if he had had a little good college training he would have been a *stentor* of the *tribune*. He has a fine balance and clearness to the intellectual processes.

NELLIE. For traveling purposes use a kind of *delap*, which is very popular for costumes. Trim the dress with dark blue or black, of the same material, bound with black silk. Make with an underskirt and *potomac*, with a short cape, which can be removed at the will of the wearer.

METHEW. A child should not be awakened from its sleep with a noise, or in an impetuous manner, as it is extremely harmful; nor should it be carried from a dark room into the light, or from a dim light, or look upon a dazzling wall, for the sudden impression of light weakens the organs of vision, and lays the foundation of weak eyes from early infancy.

PHILOSOPHER. Nine ancient and classic systems of philosophy are admitted as worthy of notice. The Socratic, the Epicurean, the Platonic, the Stoic, the Pythagorean, the Peripatetic, the Aristotelian, the Cartesian and the Newtonian.

H. KNOX. The circumference of the world around the poles is 24,930 miles; around the equator it is 25,000 miles; the mean diameter is 7,926 miles. MARKHAM. Apples are certainly a most healthy article of food, and can be eaten in so many different ways that they are palatable to almost any taste. Besides contributing to the health of the body, many nutritious compounds in the form of food, apples contain a combination of vegetable acids which make them desirable as a food.

WATSON W. The number of stars shown in the northern hemisphere, and whose places have been recorded, are about 330,000. In the southern hemisphere but 50,000 have been recorded, although the sky is more favorable to discover stars south than north. As many as 6,400 stars have been seen with the naked eye in the southern hemisphere, so clear is its atmosphere.

INQUIRER. Photographs can be taken beneath the water. Fish, and submarine vegetables and rocks have been photographed by Prof. Agassiz during his late southern explorations.

YOUTH. Certain classes of animals and reptiles in northern latitudes can pass the entire winter without food, hiding in caves and secure retreats, where they can be safe from the cold and snow. They keep them alive during all these months of fasting is the absorption of the fat stored up under the skin and intestines; the mean bodies of these animals, reptiles and animals would have become extinct long ago.

METALLURGY. The general method of ascertaining the purity of silver is by mixing it with a quantity of lead, proportionate to the supposed portion of alloy. This mixture is then precipitated, and the remaining hard ball of silver remains.

THOMAS WATSON. Double-entry bookkeeping consists simply in the principle that every debit must have a corresponding credit, and every credit a corresponding debit. This is the basis of the whole theory of double-entry bookkeeping. For instance, you charge a person with a hundred dollars' worth of merchandise, and he must have a corresponding credit of a hundred for *merchandise* debit or charge; and the entry would read thus: A. B. to Merchandise, Dr. \$100; Merchandise Cr. by A. B. \$100; thus making an equalization in the two entries.

HOUSEKEEPER. The common cause of smoky chimneys are either that the wind is too much let in above, or else that the smoke is stifled below. The situation of the house may likewise affect the draft of the chimney. The best method of cure is to carry from the air a pipe under the floor and opening under the fire; or to fix a movable cover to the top of the chimney.

FARMER. To prevent haystacks from taking fire by spontaneous combustion, take a few handfuls of salt be scattered between each layer. This not only prevents fermentation, but imparts a taste to it stimulating to the appetites of cattle, and preserving them from disease.

FLORIST. Cuttings, if inserted in a mere mass of earth, will hardly throw out roots, while, if inserted at the sides of the pots so as to touch the pot in their whole length, they seldom fail to become rooted plants. The art consists in placing them so as to touch the bottom of the pot; they are then to be plunged in a bark notched, and kept so.

A MOTHER asks for a simple remedy for curing ringworm in children. Take of sulphate of potash 8 drachms; Spanish white soap 1½ drachms; lime-water 7½ ounces, and spirits of wine 3 drachms. Mix by shaking in a bottle. Rub the affected parts with this solution, and suffering the parts to dry, the scales will peel off from the scalp and leave the parts underneath perfectly healed.

QUINER. Gun-cotton is prepared by immersing clean cotton wool in a mixture of equal parts of nitric and sulphuric acids. It is then allowed to cool, washed in cold water and dried in the sun, or by a gentle artificial heat. Soluble gun-cotton is used in making collodion.

ALEXANDER. Glass is a combination of sand, flint, spar, or other silicious substances, with one or other of the fixed alkalis. Of the alkalis, soda is commonly preferred; and of the silicious substances, white sand is in most repute.

A READER. For removing silver-stains from linen or other fabrics, rub with the following solution: cyanide of potassium, one ounce; water, one ounce. Wash freely in cold water.

Unanswered questions on hand will appear next week.

IF YOU BUT SEEK

BY A. P. M., JR.

Showers of joy and gems and gold,
Dews of pearl from a shining fount,
Pleasures that tongue has never told,
Riches such as we can not count;
Songs of love, and flowers so sweet,
Beauty above us and youth our feet—
Always a charm in the fleeting hours,
If you but seek in this world of ours.

Zephyrs of scent o'er paths of bliss—
Paths of bliss if we but desire—
Voices of glad, happy lips to kiss,
Smiles from Nature that never tire;
Happiness in its sunniest gleam,
Hearts that live in affection's dream—
All these come with the fleeting hours,
If you but seek in this world of ours.

Beautiful! beautiful! beautiful world!
Brims of scenes so glad and gay—
Scenes, alas, by so many hurled
Away, as they hurt themselves away.
Still, it is beautiful—lives—and charms,
Fearing comforts 'mid all alarms;
And o'er of balm, in the cloudiest hours,
Come, if you seek, in this world of ours!

Without Mercy:

OR,
THREADS OF PURE GOLD.

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL.

AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
"LAURA'S PERIL," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

FACE TO FACE.

WHEN Tracy reached Holcombe Hall he was conducted into the library by Bede, who said:

"Massa not up yet, sah; but I've gwine to tell him you am here. What's de name?"

"Tracy Cuthbert," replied the young man.

Bede rolled his big eyes up, and scanned the speaker from head to foot.

"So you am de gentleman dat massa's been expectin' eber so long?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Yes, indeed? Well, well, well," and with an enigmatical shake of the head Bede disappeared.

In the ten minutes that followed, Tracy had an opportunity of glancing around the room. It was richly furnished, and bespoke taste as well as wealth.

While he was scanning the books in the heavy mahogany case, he heard a footfall in the hall, and turning around, he found himself face to face with Mr. Holcombe.

The latter came forward eagerly, extending both his hands, and exclaiming:

"Welcome! welcome, Tracy, my boy—welcome to the New World."

The tears started to Tracy Cuthbert's eyes at this cordial reception, and wringing the hand extended to him, he replied:

"My dear uncle, I thank you."

"Never mind the thanks. When did you arrive?"

Tracy told him; told him, too, of his trip across the ocean; of his first impressions of America, and was just about to inform him of his marriage, when a light footfall in the hall attracted the attention of Harold, and he said:

"That is your cousin, Hester. Stop a moment: she don't know you are here; I'll call her in." He walked to the door as he spoke, and Tracy heard him add: "Your cousin, Tracy, has arrived and wants to see you."

The next instant Hester, robed in a soft cashmere morning-wrapper, and looking fresh and lovely, entered the apartment and was formally introduced.

She felt very uneasy and awkward in the presence of the new-comer, whom she had been taught to regard as her future husband, and she was glad of the opportunity to escape from the room, which the breakfast-bell afforded.

Already she knew he was very handsome, and very respectful, but she feared it would be a long time ere she could feel as easy in his society as she did now in that of Rupert Gaspard, who was all enthusiasm and fire. It is singular how fast a woman will discover that a man is cold and distant.

When Hester had left the room, Harold, dropping his voice to a whisper, said:

"She is just as good as she is beautiful, and Tracy, my boy, I have paved the way for you; there will be no difficulty about the matter at all."

Young Cuthbert looked at his uncle in surprise, and repeated:

"No difficulty?"

"Not the slightest. You are my heirs, and this affair would end in the same way, as it were, and keep it in the family."

"But, don't quite understand," put in the young man, his face coloring. "Do you mean to marry Miss Corwin to—?"

"You, of course!"

"To me?"

"Yes, to you! Goodness knows you needn't look so frightened. She is an accomplished lady—young, beautiful—"

"But, my dear sir, this thing is impossible," and Tracy rose to his feet.

"Impossible!" gasped old Harold. "Impossible! You don't mean to say that you are in love with another?"

"Yes, sir," replied Tracy; "and not only in love with her—"

"There, there, you needn't go any further," interrupted the old man, his face a vivid scarlet; "this ridiculous, romantic English love must be put aside. Do you understand, sir? Must be put aside."

"But, sir," replied Tracy, "you are laboring under a great mistake; before I left England I married the rector of Digby's daughter."

It would be impossible to paint the fierce, almost wild expression that lit up Harold Holcombe's face as he turned in his rapid walk up and down the room, and faced Tracy. He tried to speak, but the words choked him; his lips, ashen now, moved, but no sound came forth; his hands worked nervously, as if they were eager to throttle the young Englishman, and the latter, thoroughly frightened, moved forward to catch the towering old man in his arms.

"Back!" he hissed; "back! sir! Don't touch me. You ingrate! you fool!"

With these words a stream of blood dyed his lips and chin, and then he fell forward with a wild shriek that rung through the whole house. Tracy knelt down, and was about to lift Harold's head upon his knee when Toy entered.

"What have you done to him?" asked the latter, thrusting himself between Tracy and the prostrate form. "You must have said something terrible to drive him into this condition."

"I said nothing," answered Tracy, hurt to the quick, "but what I had a right to say—nay, what it was my bounden duty to say."

"And pray, sir, what was that?" without looking up.

"That I was married, and could not accept the hand he offered me."

Hester was standing in the doorway as he said this, deathly pale, and with hot tears in her eyes. She felt that she appeared in a false light, and yet she had not the courage just then to place herself right.

Harold was recovering now, and Toy, with the assistance of Bede, carried him up to his chamber, where Rupert followed, leaving Tracy and Hester alone.

The former sunk down in a chair, and covered his face with his hands, and Hester was trying never so hard to go over and place herself right with him. Had he acted less noble than he did; had he covered like a craven before the storm of that old man's passion; had he denied his wife, she would not have valued his good opinion; but, as it was, she felt that she could not permit the opportunity to escape of telling him that she was in no wise responsible for her uncle's action.

After a moment's hesitation, she walked over to where he sat, and in a low, sympathetic voice, said:

"Mr. Cuthbert, permit me to say that I respect you for the course you have pursued in refusing to disguise facts, and believe me when I say that Mr. Holcombe's action is as repugnant to me as it could possibly be to you."

"Then you are Miss Corwin, of whom he spoke?" said Tracy, extending his hand, which was readily taken by the other.

"Yes, I am Miss Corwin. I am very—very sorry that we meet under such disagreeable circumstances, Mr. Cuthbert—very sorry, indeed."

The tears were dimming her eyes now, and the contour of Tracy's face was lost in misty rurs.

"I feel sure of that," he replied, "and I can assure you, my dear young lady, that I regret this unpleasant affair, not only for the wrong it will do me, but for the pain it causes you. And now—good-by."

"You are not going?"

"Not going, Miss Corwin? Do you think me so dead to all sense of propriety that I could remain here, after what has taken place?"

"But, uncle Harold, as soon as the first gust of passion blows over, will repent his hasty words. Besides, you are a stranger in a strange land, and—"

"And financially ill-provided for," put in Tracy; "but no matter. I have youth, ambition, health, and these, in a new country like this, can not be long in necessitous circumstances. I am certainly much obliged to you, Miss Corwin, for your kindness, and I hope at no distant day I will have a chance to reciprocate fully."

"But where do you intend going?"

"To New Orleans for the present."

"And not back to England?"

"No," with a slight hesitation, "I could not go back now, for—and I blush to confess it—I depended on receiving aid from my uncle on my arrival. This, of course, is now out of the question, and—"

Hester advanced a step, and said, with great eagerness: "I have a small sum, Mr. Cuthbert, if it would be of any use to you—"

He put up his hand as to waive the proffered succor, and replied:

"Pardon me, Miss Corwin. I'm deeply sensible of your kindness, but I can not accept." He lifted her hand to his lips, and she felt hot tears drop upon it as he said: "Good-by! God bless you, Miss Corwin! Hester, farewell!"

She was about to speak when she felt herself rudely thrust aside, and Harold Holcombe, with wild, staring eyes, disheveled hair, and blood-stained garments, stood between her and Tracy, and pointed, imperiously, to the door.

"Go!" he cried, hoarsely, to Tracy. "Leave my house; never cross my threshold again—as long as you live."

The young man never spoke a word—he could not have spoken had he so desired—he was too deeply wounded for words, and, with ashen face and quivering lips, he passed out of the room, staggered along the hall, and finally found himself in the open air again, friendless, almost penniless, and in a strange land, too.

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE STEP.

WHEN the door had closed upon Tracy, the old man, still trembling with half-suppressed passion, turned to Hester.

"So you join the league against me, too, do you? you whom I thought the very soul of gratitude—the very spirit of constancy—you whom I have nourished in my very heart to turn and sting me! Oh! this is too much for flesh and blood to stand, and I could almost find it in my heart to strangle you."

He advanced, with outstretched arms, menacingly, while Hester, now terror-stricken at this violent exhibition, shrunk back to avoid his grasp, exclaiming:

"Oh, uncle Harold! don't! don't!"

What would have followed if it were possible to conjecture, had not Rupert Gaspard made his appearance on the scene, at this moment, and leaping to Hester's side, said, hotly:

"Mr. Holcombe, I am surprised at this conduct—this treatment of a delicate girl. It is unworthy of you, sir."

Harold's face showed at once that he was a trifle abashed at this; but he was not a man to be easily conquered, and so he replied:

"Senior Gaspard, you will pardon me if I remind you of the fact that this is my house; that my family troubles are not the common property of every person who chances to stop a night under my roof; and finally, sir, that I don't wish any interference from outside parties."

Rupert was stung to the quick, and his hot Spanish blood tingled in every vein; but, notwithstanding his anger, his judgment did not desert him, and bowing with mock politeness, he said:

"You are quite right; I had forgotten my character as guest; but, sir, and this he said with great emphasis, I never forget that I am a man, and that it is the duty, as well as the privilege, of every man to protect a lady from insult or injury."

This was too much for Harold to bear, and, scarce knowing what he did, he again pointed to the door, and cried out: "Go, you too—go! go!"

Rupert clenched his fist and took a step toward Harold, but Hester caught his arm. "For my sake," she whispered.

His hand dropped, and a soft light came into his face. "For your sake," he replied, and pressing her hand warmly, he left the apartment.

Toy, who had been a silent spectator of

the scene, now came to the side of his master, and said: "Don't let this matter trouble you; it can all be explained to her."

But Harold, who had sunk into a large stuffed chair, only moaned in response, and Hester stole on tiptoe past the two men, and up to her chamber, where she cast herself down and cried out in her anguish:

"Oh! why have I been left alone in the world? Why have I no father, no mother, no friend?"

Then, after a fit of weeping, she knelt down and prayed to Heaven, and to that mother she had never seen, to guide her, and protect her in this trying, troublesome hour.

All day she remained there, sobbing, and trying to resolve to do something that would lift her from her present dependent state; but in vain.

When the gray twilight had taken possession of the Mississippi, and the shadows were deepening into night, Bede came to her, with a tray on which was temptingly displayed her supper.

"Who sent this, Bede?" she asked.

"Mamma Mima," replied Bede; "an' she wants ye to not cry dat way ye was a-doin' when she was up heah, dis aftahnoon."

Hester promised she would not cry any more, and after Bede had set down the tray and was about to retire, she asked: "Where is Mr. Gaspard?"

"Gone."

"Gone! Where?"

"Don't know. 'Bijah helped him wid his trunk down to de Bend, an' I 'spec' he's gone to New Orleans."

"When did he go?"

"Bout an' hour aftah de fass wid ole massa. I golly! by he went off in de biggest huff I eber saw."

The girl said nothing further, and Bede, after standing at the door in silence for a moment, opened it quietly, and was off.

When Hester could hear the shuffling gait of the African no longer, she sat down at the window and burst into tears again.

Now that she knew Rupert Gaspard had left Holcombe Hall, possibly never to return, she began to realize, more keenly than ever, how utterly lonely, how desperately wretched, how abjectly dependent, her whole life had been, and was. And she began to realize, too, that Rupert's short visit had brought her the only genuine pleasure she had ever experienced, and, although this came to her in a vague, indistinct way, it awoke a consciousness in her heart that he was not wholly indifferent to her; while his looks and words during that stormy scene in the library were, she thought, susceptible of a broad and gratifying construction.

The lights in the negro-quarters were twinkling through the ebon darkness, when Hester arose, with the light of a fierce determination in her face; and, going to a set of drawers, she took from thence a well-filled purse, a heavy cloak, and a dainty bonnet.

Dressing herself hastily, she opened her chamber door and listened an instant. There was a perfect silence, the ticking of the great clock in the hall alone breaking the dead stillness.

Glancing back into the room which had been both her home and her prison, she said, in a voice that quivered with emotion:

"Good-by, old room; perhaps I shall never see you, nor you shall see me again."

Then she crept down the stairs, into the long, dark corridor. Here she paused to listen to Mima, who was crooning a plaintive air in the kitchen. Hester was tempted to rush in and kiss the old woman good-by, and she actually started to do so, when the library door opened and Toy came out.

She shrunk back, close to the wall, to escape observation, and kept as still as death until the servant disappeared in the dining-room. Then, thoroughly frightened, and fearful of discovery, she hurried along the hall, passed out of the great black hall door, and turned her steps in the direction of the river.

CHAPTER IX.

LEAVING HOME.

WHEN she had proceeded a short distance she turned around and surveyed, with one sweeping glance, the grim pile that had for so many years been her home, and for the first time, since that sudden resolve to leave it had entered her head, she trembled at the thought of going out from its protecting roof—trembled for the future, lest it might bring her more misery than she had known in the past; and she trembled, too, lest she should find the world she was about to face, a heartless, unyielding fiend, such as she had heard her uncle so often describe.

"It may be the monster he says it is," she muttered, turning away, "but it can not be much more heartless or selfish than the existence I have known."

Onward she sped through the brambles, under the oaks and by the somber cypress, never pausing until 'Bijah's cabin was reached.

She glanced in through the open window and saw the old slave and his wife, Bett, sitting by the wood fire, on which their supper was being cooked.

Hester hesitated to confide in Bett at first; she knew comparatively little of her, but on 'Bijah's discretion she felt she could not only rely with certainty but count upon his co-operation; and so she determined to stand at the window until she could arrest the attention of the old field-hand.

The old couple were talking about the relative merits of certain field "boys," and she heard Bett say:

"Nebber since de day I kum to de Ben' hab I seen cotton-picks as it was down on Bayou Black. No, sah!"

"Dat's pure down prejudice," retorted the other party to the controversy; "an' I kin tell ye, Miss Bett, dat dar nebber was a nigh on Fortier's plantation could pick cotton or hoe cane wid dis chile in his young days. Dat's a sah pop!"

"Well," said the old woman, rising, "I s'pose you is right 'Bijah, boy. It amn't fur me to dispise my own flesh an' blood. What's dat?" she exclaimed, pausing in alarm, as she caught sight of Hester's white face at the window.

"What's what?" demanded 'Bijah, rising. "Dar's a spirit at dat window. Oh, Lor, s'be us and bress us, bofe heart an' gizzard!"

With these pious words in her mouth she fled to 'Bijah, who, throwing an encircling arm about her, fixed his big eyes on the empty casement.

Hester, seeing she could not evade the consequences of Bett's discovery, pushed open the rude cabin door and entered.

She had not yet crossed the threshold when 'Bijah, now thoroughly frightened,

exclaimed: "Stop dar! Who am you; dehl or spirit, who am you?"

"Why, uncle 'Bijah, don't you know me—Hester?"

The negro's eyes stared at her for an instant, then a broad smile lit up the black face, and, forgetting his own trepidation, he turned to Bett, and said:

"Well, Bett, ole gal, aftah dat dar's no use in talkin'. Can't tell de little missah from a ghostess. I allers t'ink you know mo' dan dat."

"But, was I lookin' foh her, say?"

"No, I spec' not; neider was I," returned 'Bijah, dusting a hickory chair with his coat-tail, and placing it before the fire for his visitor.

"No, uncle 'Bijah, I won't sit," said Hester. "I have come here to ask your assistance—your help."

"Ask de ole man to do any t'ing you wish," was the ready reply; "he'll do it, sul."

"But this is something out of the ordinary run of favors."

"Don't car' 'Bijah will jump into de Mississippi if you on'y say de word."

"Hole on, ole man," put in Bett; "let de missah speak out, will you?"

"I axes de missah's pa'don," and the old man bowed profoundly, his hand upon his heart as an evidence of his sincerity. "What does you want?"

"I want to go down de river," replied Hester, her voice a-tremble.

"Down de ribber?" exclaimed the old couple, in one breath. "Whar?"

"To New Orleans—and—and, maybe to New York or Havana. I havn't made up my mind which, yet. But, I'm going away from here to-night to somewhere."

"An' you don't tole me dat yer gwine 'way from Big Brier, do ye?"

"Yes, from Big Brier Bend and Holcombe Hall, too."

"But, does de massa know?" asked Bett.

"No!"

"An' Lor' bress us, you amn't runnin' 'way, is ye?" Bett's eyes were extremely large now, and her mouth wide open in wonder.

"Yes, I am!" replied Hester, desperately. "I can't live here any longer. Another year of this isolation and cold prison-like life would kill me. I must go."

"Yes, but, missah, if 'Bijah helps you to git 'way an' de ole massa finds it out, he kill him, sul."

Hester had not thought of that before, but now she felt the force of Bett's rebuke keenly, and hastened to say:

"You are right, aunt Bett; it was very selfish, wickedly selfish in me to ask 'Bijah to endanger himself by aiding my flight; and now, if ye both promise not to speak to any one of my having been here, I'll go."

'Bijah stepped in between Hester and the door, and, after looking severely at Bett a moment, he said:

"Don't talk dat way 'bout me, ef you please, Missah Hestah. I se on'y a poor, good-fur-no-ting niggah, whose best days hab be done gone; but I se still got a brave 'h'art, missah, an' I'll help you out of dis scrape if dey kill me for it."

There were warm tears of gratitude in the young girl's eyes as she said:

"Oh, 'Bijah, I don't want to get you into trouble—you have a wife, and—"

"Nebber min' de wife part," interrupted Bett, stirred into sympathy by her husband's brave words. "Ef de ole man t'inks it's right, an' he ought to do it, Bett ain't de gal to say no, nor 'trow timba in his way."

'Bijah was proud of this speech, for he looked softly at his wife, and then, turning to the weeping girl, said:

"So you is goin' 'way from de ole plantation, is you?"

"Yes," with a sob.

"Nebber to kum back ag'in no mo' h'?"

"I don't know, 'Bijah, I'm sure. Not for a long time, any way."

"Well, Missah Hestah, ef you stays away a long while you'll nebber see ole 'Bijah ag'in. As de good book says, 'Deaf comes like a lion in de night and gobbles us up afore mornin'.' There was a pause, then he added: "Ole 'Bijah will miss his little missah, dat saved him from manys a scoldin' and once from de whip, berry, berry much, indeed."

There were tears in all their eyes now, and not a word was spoken for fully five minutes; then 'Bijah, taking down a large lamp and lighting it, said:

"Stay heah, Missah Hestah, an' I'll go down an' build a fire on de bank."

"On the bank?" echoed Hester.

"Yes; de Eclipse will be down from Natchez in a few hours, an' ef dey don't see a light, dey won't land in de bend."

"But, may not de folks at de Hall see de fire and possibly come down to see who is going away?" asked the girl.

"Lor, no," was the reply. "Dey'll t'ink it's one of de Hargraves' folks goin' somewhere. You know dey always goin' 'way."

This reasoning seemed cogent enough, and 'Bijah pushed open the cabin-door, hid the lantern under his great coat, and, hastily as his legs would carry him, made his way to the river.

Once behind the levee, he placed the light on the sand and proceeded to gather a quantity of dry drift, which done, he ignited it with the candle in his lantern, and then sat down to watch the wood blaze.

For awhile the flame made but little headway, owing to the sand that coated every thing on the shore, and which was damp with the dew, but as his became dry, and fell off, the red fire leaped high, casting a lurid glare on the water of the great river, and lighting up the dark cypress and dense cottonwood with an illumination that was almost ghastly.

For an hour the good old negro sat there, nourishing the fire and straining his ear for the noise of an approaching steamer, and, at last, a boat, bound up stream, crept along the opposite shore and disappeared around the point.

'Bijah was growing very tired, when he heard a shrill whistle from the boat which had just got fairly out of sight, and the next moment this was answered by another whistle, which sounded a great deal like a shriek.

"Dat's her; dat's de ole packet!" he cried, jumping to his feet. "I'd know her, too, any way."

He was right; it was the once celebrated steamer Eclipse, and she came dashing around the point, which was three miles off, with a rapidity that spoke well for her speed.

The old negro grasped his lantern and waved it over his head. Again it made the circuit, and then 'Bijah waited to see if his signal had been noticed. No, it had not, for it was evidently the intention of the pilot to keep out of the bend as much as possible by hugging the opposite shore.

"Dat tin fixin' ain't de t'ing, I pec' on such a dark night as dis one," muttered the old man, depositing it at his feet, and seizing a burning fagot, he waved it a half-dozen times as high in the air as he could reach.

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one side the separation was voluntary, it seemed to both a destiny inexorable. The parting was soon over, but its agony remained long after they had left the place; Helen Armstrong going home to a father she might find dead; Charles Clancy to seek vengeance for a mother, who, too surely, had been murdered.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

A PURSUIT.

In the courtyard of the San Saba Mission lay nine corpses, all told.

The white men, who rushed out of the dining-room, did not stay to count them. They were but the dead bodies of slaves; and their fellow-slaves, who had succeeded in concealing themselves, now cautiously emerging from their places of concealment, alone stood over them.

Their masters were too intensely engrossed about those of nearer and dearer relationship to give them more than a passing glance. They were in fear of finding, not far off, other dead bodies with skins that were white.

As soon as released from their imprisonment they ran hither and thither like maniacs escaped from a madhouse.

Most of Colonel Armstrong's guests made direct for the rancheria. The young surgeon, Wharton, stayed by his host, sharing his anguished apprehensions. The hunters, Hawkins and Cris Tucker, both being bachelors, and having no care beyond, also remained.

Dupre was almost frenzied with the agony of the hour. The old soldier felt it quite as keenly, but acted with more coolness. As he called for his daughters, in turn pronouncing their names, the remnant of household servants came clustering around him.

Helen's maid was among them, the mulatto girl, Julia. She had evaded the savages by shutting herself up in her young mistress's sleeping-chamber.

"Where are they, Julia—my daughters?" was the earnest interrogatory.

The girl could only answer it by saying that some time after they had left the dinner-table she had seen them going out into the garden.

Al rushed thither, Colonel Armstrong leading the search, Dupre and Wharton close following.

The names "Helen!" "Jessie!" rung through the inclosure, penetrating every part.

There was no answer, save echoes from the old walls, and other echoes further off—the reverberations of their voices in the forest outside.

The garden was soon gone through—searched everywhere. Now not with any hope that the sisters were alive, but a fear of finding their dead bodies.

They were not found there, nor anywhere; and the conjecture was, they were not dead. Though little less dismal was the conclusion came to—that they had been carried off.

"Oh, Heaven! to think they were captives, and who were their captors! The red-skinned, red-handed savages that had left such sanguinary traces behind them!"

Up to this time Colonel Armstrong had preserved a certain equanimity—the stoical strength due to age and stern experience. It now gave way, as the worst came before him. The father's heart had been too severely tested; it was on the point of yielding to despair.

The young planter was equally stricken, showing it more.

It gave them but slight relief when their fellow-colonists came crowding from the rancheria, with the report that the Indians had not been there. The people dwelling in the adobe huts had seen nothing of the savages, nor heard aught of what had occurred, till awakened out of their sleep by the return of those who had been in the dining-room.

There was no need for much questioning now. All seemed clear—too clear. A party of Indians—no doubt that seen by Hawkins and Tucker—had beset the building, their aim being plunder. The half-breed, it seemed, was at the bottom of it, and had concocted the whole scheme. Knowing of Dupre's treasure, he had put himself in communication with the savages, and obtained their assistance in carrying it off.

Coming up through the garden, they had accidentally encountered the young girls and taken them away, perhaps as a measure of precaution. Or it might be—horrid thought!—that the villainous *sang melle* designed including them in his scheme of spoliation!

This was the summing up, hastily done, as the colonists, mingling, became acquainted with what had transpired.

Pursuit, of course! But how? And in what direction?

It required coolness and consideration. The time for hurried action had gone by. It could do no good, but the reverse. By this the spoilers would be well advanced on their way to some place of safety; too far off to be overtaken by any direct pursuit. The astuteness of which they had given proof, in grasping the spoil, left no likelihood of their acting inconsiderately afterward. They had not gone off with a knowledge that fifty men would be sure to come after them—each carrying a rifle and skilled in the use of it—without taking precautions to cover their retreat.

And who could tell the direction they had taken? It was night, and their trail could not be lifted before daylight. It might be, in places where the moonbeams fell upon open ground. But not beneath the shadows of that forest stretching away behind the Mission walls. Through this it was evident they had retreated with their spoils.

Dupre, with some of the younger and more excitable members of the community, clamored for immediate pursuit. They spoke without reflecting on what way it was to be made. Even Colonel Armstrong was inclined to their setting out at once. The bereaved father, half-distracted, was no longer himself.

Fortunately, there was one man among them who, still preserving coolness, knew how to act. It was the hunter Hawkins. He said:

"It's no use, now, our goin' after them in a hurry. They've had the start too far. We wouldn't have the slightest chance of overtaking them. Not till they get to their roostin'-place, wherever that be. I reckon, from what me and Cris Tucker saw, we'll be able to find it. But we must approach them a different way than ridin' straight on 'em. There were only a score in the party that's been here; but that ain't likely to be all o' them. There may be ten times as many waitin' for them somewhere else. If

ye'll take my advice, gentlemen, before starting ye'll fit out in a proper fashion, prepared for any thing that may turn up. Then ye'll have a chance to get what ye go after. Let Cris Tucker and me, and some o' the others as are ready, take a scout down to the crossing-place, and see if they're gone back over the river. Most like they have; but, they mayn't. If not ye'd only lose time by all goin' there, besides not bein' prepared to keep on. A few of us can ride quicker, an' be back here by the time the rest o' you are ready."

Colonel Armstrong yielded to this counsel. Despite his anguished impatience, the old soldier could perceive that a hasty, reckless riding after the savages might not only end in disappointment, but still further disaster.

It was a dread thought he had to endure—the reflection that his daughters, dear as his own life, were at that moment struggling in the arms of—Oh, Heaven! hinder him from thinking of it!

Dupre, still agitated, was calling for immediate pursuit. He would have insisted upon it, but for being swayed by the more prudent counsel of him he now looked upon as his father. To this he yielded, and the deliberations were brought to a close by an assent to the proposal of Hawkins.

By this time half a score of the colonists, who had gone back to the rancheria, came up on their horses, armed and accoutered for the scout.

Tucker was among them, now on horseback, holding another horse in hand. It was the steed of his hunter comrade, who, laying hold of the rein and throwing his thigh over the saddle, led off in stern, earnest silence; the others in like silence riding after.

CHAPTER LXXV.

PURSUED.

A MAN on horseback making his way through a wood. It is a tract of virgin forest, in which ax of settler has never sounded. And rarely traversed by ridden horse; still more rarely by pedestrian.

He now passing through it rides along no road, no trodden path, no trace of any kind. For all, he goes as rapidly as the thick-standing tree-trunks and the tangles of underwood will allow.

At the same time he shows caution, and on his face there is fear. It is not of any thing before, but evidently something behind. This can be told by the way he sits his saddle—at intervals slewing himself round, and glancing apprehensively back. After of each of these twistings he again faces forward, and urges the animal on.

The moonbeams, here and there slanting down through breaks in the forest foliage, give light enough to guide him along his course, though he does not appear to be sure of it. The only thing certain is that he has a fear of something behind, and is fleeing from it.

Now and then he makes stop, holds his horse in check, and listens. It is for the purpose of ascertaining whether he still hears in the same direction, a thing not easily done in passing through a pathless forest.

Under the circumstances how can his ears avail him? They would not always, though now they do. He hears a sound, which he knows to be that of water in motion—the south of a flowing river.

He does not stay to listen to its monotone. Soon as hearing it, and noting the side from which heard, he urges on his horse in the opposite direction. It is evident he does not intend proceeding to the river's bank. He has parted from it, and has no desire to go back again.

After a series of these short pauses and shoots forward, he at length arrives on the timber's edge. There he sees before him an expanse of open plain. The moon, gleaming down upon it, shows it clothed with tall grass, which, stirred by the night breeze, and silvered by the moonbeams, resembles the surface of a tropic sea covered with phosphorescent medusae. Swarms of fireflies, playing among the stalks, and flitting hither and thither, make the resemblance more complete. The hastening horseman thinks not of these, nor even looks at them. The expression upon his face tells that he is not in a mood for contemplating nature. His eyes are fixed upon a dark line, seen beyond the moonlit plain.

It looks like the border of another tract of timber similar to that passed through. In reality it is the continuous facade of a cliff, shutting in the opposite side of the valley. He knows it is this, and intends making for it. He only stays to scrutinize its profile, and take bearings for a point with which he has a previous acquaintance.

This apparently determined, he sets his horse once more in motion, and rides off over the plain; not now in zigzags, or slowly, as when passing through the timber, but in a straight, tail-on-end gallop, fast as his animal can go.

An odd sort of horseman, looking at him in the moonlight! He would appear equally singular, seen by the light of day. He wears the costume of a Comanche Indian; and his hands, wrists, arms—so far as seen—have the correct red-skin color. Not so his face, which is white; under the moon showing pallid and dingy, like that of a chimney-sweep carelessly cleansed.

There is no one to smile at these incongruities; no one to take note of them; and the fleeing horseman gallops on over the plain without interruption.

Once under the shadow of the cliff he pulls up, and, seated in his saddle, casts a glance along its face. A spot of triangular shape, with apex inverted, darker than the adjacent wall, shows a break in the escarpment. It is the embouchure of a ravine, whose bottom is the bed of an intermittent stream, running only when there is rain.

It is now dry, and its channel gives a practicable path to a plain above, the surface of which is on the same level with the crest of the cliff, the latter being but its termination.

Toward the dark embrasure the horseman heads, as if he had been there before. In like fearless manner he enters within its grim jaws, and rides on up the slope, under the somber shadow of rugged rocks overhanging right and left.

It costs him a climb of some twenty minutes, after which he again emerges into clear moonlight upon the upper plain.

Here he once more makes halt, and looks back. His view is over a river-bottom, with a continuous line of timber seen afar off, and nearer some isolated groves, with open expanses between. It is the valley of the San Saba. After gazing at it for a while, he dismounts; as he does so, muttering:

"There can be no good in my going any

further. I may as well stay here till the rest come up. They can't be much longer now, unless they've had a fight to detain them. That I don't think at all likely, after what the half-breed told us. In any case some of them must soon come this way. D—n! To think of Sime Woodley here! And after me, sure, for the killing of Charles Clancy! Harkness, too, with him. He's met my old jailer somewhere on the way, and brought him back to help in tracking me. What the devil can it all mean? Are the Fates combining against me?"

"There appeared others along with Woodley. One of them so like Clancy himself, I could have sworn it was he, if I hadn't been sure of having settled him. Dead certain of that. If ever gun-bullet gave a death shot, mine did. The last breath was out of his body before I left him."

"Sure he's dead. But sure Sime Woodley isn't. Curse this ugly-headed backwoodsman! He appears to have been created for the especial purpose of pursuing me."

"And she in my power, to let her so slackly escape! I may never have such a chance again. Now safe, she'll go home, not only to curse, but mock me! Before letting go, I should have driven my knife into her. Hach! Why did I not do it? Why not? Hach!"

A glance of chagrin accompanies the exclamation; dark and demonic, such as Satan may have given when expelled from Paradise.

A moment's pause, then the soliloquy is continued.

"No good my grinning about it now. Regrets won't get her back. Well; there may be another chance, in spite of Sime Woodley and all of them. If I live there shall be, though it cost half my life to bring it about."

Another pause, spent in apparent reflection. Again the soliloquy.

"No; I won't go further till the boys come up. 'Tisn't likely Sime Woodley will follow me on here. He and his party appeared to be afoot. I saw no horses. They might have been near, for all that. But they can't tell which way I took through the timber, and can't track me till after daylight, anyhow. Before then Borlase is pretty certain to be along. Just possible he may come across Woodley and his lot. They're sure to make for the Mission, and sure to take the road up the other side. There's a good chance of their being met at the crossing, unless that beggling fellow has let all out. Maybe they've killed him on the spot. I didn't hear the end of it, and hope they have."

"It won't do for me to stand conspicuously here. Woodley might know of this pass, and take it into his head to come straight on—thinking I'd make for it. If so, and he should get here first, that would be a fix for me. I must strike for cover. Where's the best place?"

He glances around. His eye falls upon a dark mass about a quarter of a mile off, and some two hundred yards out from the cliff's edge.

It is a grove of black-jack oak; the trees, though small, growing close, branched to the roots, and unbragued.

"The very place! Under cover there I can see all that comes up, and will know our fellows through this clear moonlight. I'll do."

Springing back into his saddle, he again sets the horse in motion, and rides on toward the grove.

On reaching it, he dismounts, leads his animal in among the trees, and makes it fast by tying the bridle-rein to a branch.

There is a tin canteen hanging from the horn of the saddle, capable of holding half a gallon. It is still half-full, not of water, but whiskey. The other half he has drunk during the day, the larger portion of it while carrying off the captives. He then drank to give him courage and add to the ecstasy of his triumph. He now carries the canteen to his lips in the hope of tempering his chagrin. He drinks also because of late addicted to it.

Standing in shadow on the outer edge of the grove, he watches for the coming of his confederates. He keeps his eyes upon the point where the gorge goes down to the river valley. They could ascend it without his seeing them, but not pass on over the upper plain. Horse or man crossing there would show conspicuously.

They must soon, else he will not see them. His sight is rapidly becoming obscured, and the equilibrium of his body endangered. Chagrin, impatience, the increasing passion for drink, prompt him to carry the canteen too often to his lips, and hold it there too long. As the vessel grows lighter, so does his head. This only at first. Afterward the head becomes heavy; while his limbs refuse longer to support the weight of his body. With an indistinct perception of being unable to keep his feet, and in belief he might better in a horizontal attitude, he staggers back to where he has tied his horse, reels, and falls heavily to the earth.

In ten seconds after he is asleep. If Jim Borlase had come along and seen him just then, he would have said:

"Phil Quantrell's drunk!"

(To be continued—commenced in No. 97.)

THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

A STRANGE STORY OF THE TEXAN FRONTIER!

(THE RIGHT OF DRAMATIZATION RESERVED.)

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "OVERLAND KIT," "WOLF DEMON," "ACE OF SPADES," "WITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE INDIAN CAMP.

"THE head-waters of the Concho, where the Twin Mountains look down upon the prairie."

The village of the White Mustang nestled by the stream.

As the strange being, who called himself the Madman of the Plains, had shrewdly guessed, the Indians had journeyed homeward, laden with their spoil, without caution.

And why should they exercise restraint? What had they to fear? That the Mexicans would attempt to rescue the prisoner and retake the herd of fat beefs, and the drove of horses which they carried with the spoils of victory? As little chance of that as of the sun falling from the sky. Where, on the frontier, would they get the thousand men to follow the

Comanche to his village amid the mountains, and there snatch from his teeth the spoil his arm had won?

So the savages had journeyed on homeward without care.

Their losses in the raid had been trifling compared to the booty that they had gained in prisoners, beaver, horses and scalps, thanks to the skill with which their leader, the White Mustang, had planned the surprises which gave them the hacienda of Bandera and the town of Dhanis.

Gleefully then they pursued their homeward path—without care, without caution.

Bandera and his daughter had been treated with great respect. Both guessed the reason, and trembled when they thought of it.

At length the Indian village was reached. As the Madman had predicted, band after band had separated from the main body on the homeward march, and only the warriors of the White Mustang's village, some three hundred in number, remained when they struck the Concho and commenced to follow the course of the stream upward.

The village of the Comanche chief was situated in a little valley shut in by low hills, spurs of the Twin Mountains. The Concho ran through the valley.

It was a lonely spot; the timbered hills breaking the force of the wind in every direction. The prairie without abounded in game, while the limpid stream, which murmured over golden sands through the valley, was filled with fish.

Little wonder that the Comanche chief was proud of his home.

Bandera and his daughter were placed in two wigwams, close to the lodge of the White Mustang, and an ample guard stationed around it.

An hour after the chief arrived in the valley a second war-party came in, consisting of some twenty warriors, and they bore as prisoners Luis Bandera and Silver Spear, whom they had captured on the prairie just below Dhanis.

The half-breed was the woman who had accosted Luis in the square.

Then came a third troop, the last—ten warriors only—with a single prisoner, Lope, the Panther.

The adventurer had remained on the roof of the hacienda, and from it witnessed the Indian attack.

At the risk of his neck he had dropped from the roof to the ground at the rear of the house, and plunged into the river. Emerging from the stream on the other side, he had followed the Sego down, and thus had fallen into the hands of the Indians coming up.

Lope was conveyed away at once and placed in a wigwam, but the girl and Luis endured the inspection of all the tribe—the color of the girl being a puzzle to them.

At last they, too, were placed in a wigwam—quite a large one, and filled with buffalo-skins.

A guard was set before the door, and then the Indians withdrew.

But the guard was not the only watch upon the prisoners, for one of the chiefs laid himself down at the back of the wigwam, and, placing his ear close to the skin which formed the wall of the lodge, listened to the conversation of those within.

The two had had but little chance for conversation since their meeting in Dhanis.

"A gloomy prospect before us," said young Bandera, slowly.

"Yes," replied the girl, sadly.

"Answer me one question," said the youth, suddenly; "why did you tell me in Dhanis that we must part forever?"

"Because it was the truth."

"But the reason—do you no longer love me?"

"Because your father would never consent that you should wed me, the poor half-breed," the girl replied.

"A father cares nothing for me. He has disowned me. When you disappeared so suddenly, I resolved to find you if you were in Mexico. I sought my father's aid, and, in consideration of a sum of golden ounces, agreed never to let him see my face again. My father knows nothing of our love."

"There, you are wrong; he knows every thing," the girl said, quickly.

"What makes you think so?" Luis asked, in surprise.

"Because he attempted my life. You shall know all now—the reason of my sudden disappearance. One night three men burst into my little cottage. I was on my knees, telling my beads. They seized, bound and gagged me, bore me from the house to a lonely spot by the river; there they were joined by a fourth man, evidently the leader. He was masked and wrapped in a cloak, but in him I recognized my father. The three men then bound me to the back of a wild steed, loosed their hold upon him, and sent me forth to death. It was a terrible ride. I shudder even now when I think of it."

"And you think that my father doomed you to this terrible death because I loved you?"

"What other reason could he have?"

"I can tell you that," said a voice, coming from beneath one of the buffalo-ropes, and the Panther stuck his head out from under the cover. "Strange things happen in this world, and it is one of those strange chances that I should happen to be placed in the same wigwam with you two, and overhear your conversation, as I am probably the only man in the world who can explain this mystery to you. But, first, a question," he addressed the girl. "Were you not brought up by Father Philip, the Mission Priest?"

"Yes, señor," the girl answered, in surprise.

"Do you remember any thing of your childhood?"

"A little."

"A great house—a sudden shock—a man carrying you on a milk-white steed across the prairie!" asked the adventurer, eagerly.

"Yes—I remember something like that, but it seems like a dream," the girl answered, slowly.

"It is reality!" the Panther cried. "I am the man who rode with you on the milk-white horse. Young sir, you are the son of Ponce de Bandera; this girl is the daughter of your uncle, Juan De Bandera, whom your father murdered that he might seize his estate. She is your cousin, and the rightful heir to all the broad acres of Bandera."

"Is it possible?" cried Luis, in intense surprise.

"It is possible!" the Panther replied, firmly. "In Dhanis I have the papers to back my words. In Dhanis I forgot—the savages have given it to the flames. It is of little consequence now, though," he added, with a grimace. "Ponce de Bandera

bound you on the back of the wild horse and sent you forth to perish in the desert because you were the daughter of the man he killed, because you were the heir that might some day rise up in his path and dispute his claim to the estates of Bandera. While you lived, he feared. This is the secret. If I had known ten days ago what I know now, this hour I would have been in the city of Mexico, jingling a thousand golden ounces together, instead of being here a miserable captive in the hands of the Comanche." And the adventurer groaned in disgust.

"I can hardly believe this wondrous story," Luis said, in astonishment.

"It makes very little difference now," the Panther said. "Bandera is a home for the owl and the coyote, and we, helpless here."

"We may be able to buy our ransom," said the young man, hopefully.

"Buy! With what?" asked the adventurer. "The herds of Bandera are already in the hands of the Indians."

"Alas, I fear that we are lost!" the young Mexican exclaimed.

"Let us hope," the girl said; "let us not give way to despair until the last hour comes."

An Indian entered the lodge; it was the chief, Ah-hu-la. He assisted the captives to rise and bade them follow him.

An escort of braves conducted the three to the end of the valley. There they found horses waiting. The arms of the captives were unbound.

"Mount and ride," said the chief. "The White Mustang gives you your freedom," and he placed weapons in their hands.

Amazed, the three mounted and set forth. Soon they were on the prairie, speeding rapidly southward.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE REVELATION.

GIRALDA sat alone on her couch of skins. Her thoughts were sad ones. Torn ruthlessly from all she loved, and a terrible fate before her, she doubted not that she had been spared to become the wife of some Comanche chief.

Suddenly the doorway was darkened, and a tall figure resplendent in war-paint, and in a gayly decorated garb of deer-skin, stood before her.

"White maiden, look up," said the chief, in excellent Spanish. "See White Mustang, great chief of the Comanche nation."

The tones of the chieftain's voice sounded strangely familiar to the ears of the girl, yet she had never seen the haughty Indian before.

"Will the white singing-bird come and sing in the wigwam of the great chief?" he asked, softly.

Giralda shuddered; her thought was true; she had been reserved for a dreadful fate.

"Why does the white bird shrink from the chief? Does she fear the Comanche warrior?"

"The white bird can not mate with the red chief," she answered, slowly.

"Why not?"

"Because she loves another."

"The white hunter with the long rifle—the horse-tamer? Wail! The White Mustang will take his scalp, and it shall dry in his wigwam."

Giralda looked at the chief for a moment, a glint of the old-time fire in her eyes, but she made no answer.

"The white bird is angry with the chief—angry because he loves her and hates the horse warrior," the keen-witted savage said, slowly. "Does the white bird guess why the Comanche chief led his warriors to Dhanis?"

"The chief came once before," the girl said, a covert gleam of malice in her dark eyes.

"And went back—quick—too," replied the Indian. "The Comanche does not forget. Too few warriors then—plenty now. Will white bird sing in the lodge of the chief?" he asked again.

"I can not."

"White bird love her father much?" the chief said, slowly.

Giralda trembled at the question; she guessed the ordeal that was coming.

"Yes," she answered.

"Does she wish to see him burned at the stake, the Comanche warriors dancing around him and laughing at his despairing cries for mercy?"

Giralda covered her face with her hands in despair.

"The Mexican girl will see her father die unless she consents to become the squaw of the chief," the Comanche said, firmly. "If white bird consents, the old chief shall go free."

into the wigwam, bearing a blazing torch, roused him from his abstraction.

Bandera looked up, then started in surprise. Though decked out in the buck-skin hunting-shirt and leggings of the Indian warrior, and his face lined with the war-paint, yet the old Mexican recognized his visitor at once.

"Juan!" he cried, in wonder. He spoke the truth; it was the half-breed herdsman, Juan, who stood before him. We know him better, though, by another title!

Proudly the chief folded his arms and drew up his tall figure to its utmost height.

"No half-breed herdsman—no slave to the pale warriors," he said; "the White Mustang is the great chief of the Comanche nation."

The Indian had thrown off the mask. Juan the herdsman and the great Comanche chief were one and the same.

In blank amazement the Mexican gazed upon the Indian. The strange discovery had rendered him speechless.

"The White Mustang laid aside his plumed head-dress, washed the war-paint from his face, and stole like a snake into the walled lodge of the white-skinned. He became a white brave that he might betray them unto death—that he might win the Mexican singing-bird, Giralda, for his own. He had sworn by the great Wahcondah never to rest while the great lodge of Bandera frowned upon the prairie. He spoke loud, and the walls fell."

"This is a fearful retribution," the Mexican murmured.

"When the White Mustang took the walls of Bandera and drove off the fat beavers and the branded horses, he only took what belonged to him. The Indian chief has the blood of the pale-faces in his veins. Let the white chief look at me well. Does he not see in my face his own?"

"Yes—yes," Bandera muttered, slowly.

"When the red chief forgot that he was born an eagle, and became a fox to steal into the white wigwams, he met a white brave who told him strange things—who offered him great heaps of yellow metal, and said that he was a chief among the pale-faces. The red brave laughed to scorn broad acres and golden ounces. What were these to him who claimed the great prairie as his own, whose land was bounded only by the rising and the setting sun, who knew where the pure water ran over golden sands and the mountain-pocket held big lumps of yellow metal? He did not care to buy the secret of his birth, for he would not dwell in the land of the pale-faces if it was all given him, from the great prairie to the big waters. But the words of the white pale-face sunk deep in his heart; he spoke of a sister, and the white Indian remembered something of his childhood."

"Have you guessed the secret?" Bandera asked.

"The chief knows all," the savage answered. "The Comanche captured a red-and-white girl in the ride against the frontier, half-Indian, half-white, like the great chief of the Comanche nation. The chief listened to the talk of the captive maid in her wigwam, and soon his heart told him that she was his sister. The White Mustang is the son of Juan Bandera and the Indian girl; he is the heir to Bandera."

The chief drew himself up proudly as he proclaimed his right.

"I confess you speak the truth," Bandera said, slowly. "I am in your power; do with me what you like, for I killed your father."

"The red chief does not care for that; he will not go backward. The white blood in his veins has already spoken; his sister and the two white braves with her are free. Mounted on the Indian horse they ride for the walled lodges. The white blood will speak no more. The chief is all Indian now. Let the Mexican tell his daughter that the White Mustang is her cousin, that she must be his bride and remain forever the sunlight of the Comanche's home. Then the old chief shall go free, or he may stay in the land of the Indian, and the red chiefs shall honor their father."

"I will speak to my daughter," Bandera said, slowly; but in his heart there rose the wild thought that, sooner than see his pearl wife of the white Indian, he would kill her with his own hand; and within his soul he prayed that Heaven might send a weapon for his purpose.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE MADMAN STRIVES.

The Indian watched the old Mexican for a moment, a gleam of satisfaction upon his face.

"It is good," he said, with an air of triumph; "the white chief will speak—the white bird will come and sing in the lodge of the chief of the Comanche nation, and bear him young braves whose deeds on the war-path shall make the name Comanche a word of terror to both red chiefs and white."

With a haughty carriage the chief stalked from the tent, leaving the torch blazing within.

Hardly had the Comanche warrior emerged from the wigwam into the darkness of the night, when a strong arm clutched him by the throat, and choked back the war-cry of alarm that else he would have given.

Vainly the Comanche struggled; he was in a grip of iron. His face became purple.

Supple as a serpent, the unknown foe coiled himself around the doomed Comanche. He bore him over to the ground. Almost noiseless was the struggle; so helpless was the chief in the terrible embrace of his foe.

As the chief struggled, he vainly tried to call the brave who kept watch upon the lodge of the prisoner. He little guessed that the stout-limbed Ah-hu-la lay not ten paces from him, stone-dead, a broad knife-blade driven through his heart.

In stifled gasps the life-breath of the Indian came. The hand of steel that grasped his throat relaxed not, but the pressure grew more and more intense. The blood gushed from the nostrils of the chief in dark, clotted drops.

A great convulsion of the knotted shew, a gasp more dreadful than any of the former, and the White Mustang, the great chief of the Comanche nation—Juan, the lost heir of the Bandera estate—lay a lifeless corpse in the shadow of the wigwam, choked to death.

No mark of violence upon the body of the stalwart Indian except the necklace of blue around his throat—the war-paint of the stranger's hands!

After a careful glance into the distorted face of the once-great warrior, the conqueror rose to his feet.

A careful glance he gave around. No sign warned him that danger was nigh.

The Comanche, drunk with victory, dreamed not that a desperate foe had followed him from the Mexican frontier to his mountain home—dreamed not that the great fighting-man of the Comanche nation, who had escaped bullet and lance, saber, tomahawk and scalping-knife, on the prairie battle-field and in the Mexican town, had fallen by the hand of a single foe and in the heart of his own village.

The assailant of the chief raised the body in his arms and entered the wigwam.

Bandera stared in wonder, as, by the light of the blazing torch, he beheld the lifeless form of the great Comanche chief cast at his feet, and the terrible Madman of the Plains, knife in hand, glaring upon him!

Bandera recognized the maniac at once. "Behold the red wolf robbed of claws and teeth!" cried the Madman, in his hoarse tones, pointing to the terrible evidence of his power; and now, Ponce de Bandera, prepare for death, for your hour has come!

Bandera sprang to his feet in alarm. The purpose of the maniac was evident. His bloodshot eyes, the gleaming knife in his hand, the blade already crimsoned here and there with blood—the life-current of the stout Comanche warrior, Ah-hu-la.

"Keep off!" cried Bandera, wildly, with outstretched hands; "would you murder me?"

"Murder! I am the Sword of Gideon, sent by the Lord of Hosts to sweep you from the earth. You have lived long enough; your crimes are scarlet—your victims call aloud to Heaven for justice. Look at me well, Ponce de Bandera, thou second Cain. Twenty years have left their prints on time's record since you and I have met. Do you not remember me? This red wolf I brought into the world, and now I have sent him hence. Her eyes approve the deed, and they call for your blood also. I am your brother, Juan de Bandera, the man you tried to kill, whose wife you murdered—whose reason you destroyed. The Madman of the Plains strikes one more blow and then he dies. The red dogs think that I am a spirit, fresh from hell, because I have used the secrets of the chemist's art to frighten them from their prey. The alcoholic flame has played around my temple, the Greek fire has flashed in my hands, the steel breast-plate has protected my heart from their balls; but I am only a man, a worm of earth, and must die, by you first."

With the spring of the panther the Madman leaped upon the Mexican. Vainly Bandera endeavored to defend himself. A single thrust and the broad-bladed knife found his heart. A groan of anguish and Bandera sunk upon the floor of the wigwam, dead.

Attracted by the noise of the struggle, the red braves gathered around the wigwam. A howl of rage resounded on the air when they discovered the body of Ah-hu-la!

Then, from the wigwam, dashed the terrible Madman. He bore the body of the White Mustang in his arms and cast it into the crowd.

The Indians gave way in horror before him. Then through the Indian village, striking right and left with the tomahawk that he had taken from the body of the dead chief, he ran.

With cries of rage, recovering from their stupor of fright, the Comanches followed him.

Men, squaws and children all came. Forgotten now were the prisoners—forgotten every thing but the terrible being who was leaving a trail of blood and death behind him.

Up the steep hill's side, bounding from rock to rock, the Madman went, the Indians following wildly in his rear, sending a shower of arrows after him.

Seemingly unharmed, the Madman gained the highest peak of the mountain range. Before him the canyon, sheer down a hundred feet to the dark stream below; behind him the yelling savages, cutting off all chance of escape.

Upon the mountain peak, his dark figure looming gigantic against the sky, and the dim moonbeams shining down upon his waving locks of hair, the Madman hurled a last defiance at the red foe.

A moment his figure remained motionless upon the rock, then shot, arrow-like, through the air.

Down the canyon's side headlong he went into the dark abyss below.

The night-birds fluttered from their gloomy homes in the rock side as the rushing body went by them.

The Comanches reached the cliff-top and gazed down in horror.

The Madman had found a grave in the dark pool at the bottom of the canyon, by whose brink human foot had never trod.

Profiting by the dire confusion occasioned by the terrible Madman, the Mustang and Crockett, having been led by that strange being to the wigwam which contained Giralda, a prisoner, before he made his attack upon the Comanche chief—conducted the girl from the wigwam, and in the darkness gained the shelter of the hill. As a parting gift, the Madman had given his gray steed to the borderer to aid the escape of the girl.

The three rode night and day without waiting for food or rest, till they reached the wooded defiles of the Rio Sabinal.

There, feeling safe from pursuit, they halted and held counsel together.

Giralda willingly agreed to become the bride of the Mustang, but only pleaded for delay until she could learn her father's fate.

In Castrovilla, where the three sought refuge, from an Indian runner she learned her father's death.

Sadly she mourned that father's loss; but, in time to come, in the love of the Mustang, in their home by the banks of the beautiful Tennessee, she forgot the sorrows of the days that were past.

Luis Bandera wedded the half-breed, the Red Macepa of the Texan prairie, and became an altered man. No more the gaming-table and the wine-cup, but the homed cattle and the wild horse brought him both fame and fortune.

The Panther left the frontier. In Mexico he joined a revolutionary band, won a high position, then fickle fortune changed; he was captured by his foes and died by the garrote, reckless and defiant—"game" to the last.

For Crockett, our border lion, the pages of history tell how well he fought and how nobly he died—the victim of Mexican treachery.

And the estate of Bandera has, for its heirs, the owl and the coyote.

THE END.

We have the pleasure of stating that Mr. Albert W. Aiken, having withdrawn from the present from his dramatic engagements, to devote himself more fully to his literary work, has in preparation

A SEQUEL TO OVERLAND KIT,

which, taken all in all, may be regarded as the best story of Wild Life in the West which has ever been written. The sequel to this splendid romance has been in the author's mind for some time, and he is now so well advanced on the work that it will soon be pronounced ready. Our readers, we are sure, will receive this announcement with great pleasure and satisfaction.

Madeleine's Marriage:

OR,
THE HEIR OF BROADHURST.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET,
AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE CLOUD."

CHAPTER XXV.

BAFFLED.

WITH a beating heart, Oriol alighted from the hackney carriage at the door of her mother's house.

The door was opened by the old butler, who uttered a cry of surprise and joy.

Oriol hurried past him, and went, without assistance, up the two flights of stairs; breathless when she reached the door of her mother's apartment, so weak had her illness left her.

The door was ajar, and she saw the lady reclining in an easy-chair, pale as death, with eyes fixed seemingly on vacancy.

"Poor mamma!" murmured the girl. "She has been ill from anxiety. I must not give her a sudden shock!"

Looking round, she saw the maid, and in a whisper bade her speak to her mother, and tell her some one had come to see her. This she hoped would prepare her for the joy that might overcome her, if too abruptly communicated.

The maid went in softly, and whispered her message.

"Some one to see me?" repeated the lady, and she began to tremble violently. "Where is he? in the library?"

"It is not a gentleman," answered the maid. "It is—"

Oriol could no longer restrain herself. She rushed to her mother and flung her arms round her neck, crying and giving utterance to every passionate term of endearment.

Madeleine embraced her warmly; then she looked toward the door, as if expecting some one else.

"Who came with you?" she asked, in a tremulous whisper.

"No one, mamma! I was brought here in a hack carriage. I should have come before; but I was too ill!"

"You have been ill, my child?" exclaimed the mother.

"Very ill, indeed, and delirious, from the time they drew me out of the water. I did not know any one till early this morning."

"Out of the water, my child! What do you mean?"

"Did you not know how near I came to being drowned?"

"No; I have heard nothing, but what Julius said: that two masked ruffians stopped the carriage, intent on robbery; that you were seized and dragged out; and that the crowd separated you from the servants, who lost sight of the men, too; and that the horses, in a fright, started of themselves, and ran some distance on their way home."

"And you never knew what had become of me, poor mamma?"

"Oh, yes; a note was brought to me, saying you were safe; and every day since, a line or two on a scrap of paper, to tell me you would soon be restored to me, and that I must not be alarmed. The writing seemed familiar to me; and I have been strangely puzzled."

"If you did not know I was ill, you must have wondered why I did not come back?"

"It was all a mystery," said the lady, the far-away look coming again to her eyes; "the strange, yet familiar handwriting; your being kept from me; altogether a mystery, Oriol."

"And Frank?"

"He came, when you did not join him, to see what had prevented you. He knew as much as I did—that you were safe, but not where you were. It is very strange I was not sent for immediately."

"I was out of my head, mamma, and could not tell them who I was, nor where to send. It is well for me I was delirious; I should have suffered so much, thinking of your anxiety!"

The lady again embraced her daughter, and begged her to tell her every thing.

"It was a terrible accident, dearest mother, if I may call it an accident at all. Some robbers stopped the carriage—or nearly so—when we were passing along a lonely, dark street, near the water. The door was thrown open, and I was seized and dragged out!"

"My child!" exclaimed Madeleine, breathless.

"I screamed for help; but they stopped my mouth. They must have carried me off: for the next thing I knew was—being plunged into the river!"

The mother's arms tightened around her child, while she grew pale with horror.

"The shock deprived me of sense at once, and the next thing I was conscious of was being carried on some one's shoulder. I believe it was the driver of a carriage that was passing, who rescued me from drowning at the peril of his own life. He took me to his own house."

"His name—his name?" gasped the mother.

"I do not know his name; he did not tell it to me. But he was very kind. I was ill for three or four days; but a good old woman waited on me; changed my dress, and sat up with me at nights; and a doctor came several times to see me. But I could not speak to any one till this morning, when I waked free from fever."

"Where can I find your preserver? I must see him!" cried the lady.

"I begged him to come with me; but he would not."

"He would not come?"

"I believe he does not wish to be thanked or rewarded. He was very kind to me, mamma; he has lost a daughter of his own, he said."

"Lost a daughter!"

"Just about my age, so he said; and he seemed much affected when he spoke of it. I think he must have been a fond father."

"I must find him!"

"Stay, mamma; I saw a number on the carriage I came home in; it was two hundred and twenty-six; that may be a clue."

Just then the maid entered, to announce that Mr. Duclos wished to see Mrs. Clermont.

"Frank! Oh, mamma, I must see him!" The two ladies descended to the drawing-room, Madeleine's arm supporting her child.

It was a joyful surprise to the young man. He took the girl in his arms, and kissed her blushing cheeks again and again, in spite of her efforts to extricate herself. Then the whole story of her abduction, the attempted murder, and the rescue, was told over to him, amid his exclamations and interrupting questions.

"What could the ruffians have wanted?" he asked.

"No doubt they were robbers."

"But to attempt your life, Oriol; there was more than robbery in that!"

"I suppose they were afraid of being detected when my screams brought the people upon them. I heard the running, and men calling to each other. They did not dare to be found with me in their clutches, as they were crossing the bridge; and thought the safest way was to pitch me over."

"Oriol," said her mother, in a deep, hollow voice, "I do not believe they were robbers. Did you lose any thing?"

"Nothing at all; they had no time to take away my watch and jewels."

"They wore masks, Julius said?"

"I did not see them; something was thrown over my head the moment they seized me."

"They were not robbers," the lady repeated.

"You do not suspect—Great heavens!" exclaimed Oriol's lover.

"I do suspect one who had a design to accomplish in her abduction: who had an interest in her removal," returned Madeleine, in a low, trembling voice. "But who could the other have been?"

"Let me find one or both the villains!" exclaimed young Duclos. "Give me the name of one, and I will ferret out the other!"

"No, my son, you must not even ask. I dare not name him. But we must save Oriol from future peril."

"Let us leave London at once. I have the license. We can carry out our intention. Let us beguile this very night."

"Impossible; my child is not able to travel; she has been ill ever since her rescue."

Oriol's looks confirmed her mother's words. The excitement of meeting her mother and her lover had given her a fatigued strength, that was now leaving her, and she leaned, pale and wearied, against the arm of the sofa on which she and Madeleine were seated.

"And this wretch who has sought her life?"

"He must not know she was saved. That is our security."

The papers mentioned that the body of a young woman who had attempted suicide, had been drawn from the river," said Frank; "but not that she had been restored to life. My dear madam, we must not speak further of this now, but be assured that no effort of mine shall be wanting to discover the perpetrators of this outrage."

"We must find her preserver first," said Madeleine. "Oriol, dear child, what was the number of the carriage you mentioned?"

"Two hundred and twenty-six," answered the young girl.

"Why, I know the man," exclaimed Frank. "It is the same who found and restored my pocket book; a very honest fellow."

"His name?" whispered Madeleine.

"His name! It is Sanders—the driver of a hack. He has his stand not far from this house."

Madeleine drew a deep breath of relief after a suspense that had bewildered her.

"You know him, then; all about him?" she asked.

"I have often seen him during months past; ever since you came to this house. I noticed that he had not much custom for his carriage is always on the stand. I used it the day I lost my pocket-book."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"Indeed, I scarcely remember. Oh, now I recollect he said he had been a soldier, and had served on the Continent ten or a dozen years."

"A soldier?"

"Yes; I offered him a place as superintendent of stables; he refused it, saying an old soldier could not put on livery as a servant."

"And, oh, mamma," interrupted Oriol, "he lives in the same house with the organ-grinder—the man who has the monkey and plays under our windows! I saw the monkey asleep in his box, and eating his breakfast."

"He is very poor, then," said her mother.

"We must reward his noble service."

"He was not willing to be paid; it was for that reason he would not come home with me."

"But he must accept a reward. Frank, you must see to it; you must find him."

"I will, you may be sure. Perhaps he saw the men who committed the outrage."

They were interrupted by the entrance of a servant, who brought a card and presented it to his mistress.

Madeleine started up. "You must retire, Oriol," she exclaimed. "Marlitt must not know you are here. Quick—go into your own chamber!" and leading the girl to the music-room, she pushed her in, and closed the door. She could get thence to her sleeping-room.

She had hardly returned to her place, when Marlitt entered the drawing-room. He had composed his features to an expression of sympathetic sorrow, and offered his hand in greeting. But Madeleine did not seem to see it; she merely bowed and pointed to a chair.

Frank had risen, and was pacing the apartment uneasily. He came from the back-room just as Marlitt had delivered himself of an intended speech of condolence. He had heard a strange rumour, he said, according to Madeleine's agitation the evening she had come to his hotel. He regretted having been so hasty on that occasion. He wished to know if Oriol had returned. Her mother must be in distress, and he had come to offer his sympathy and aid.

"You did not know what had become of her?" asked his wife, regarding him steadfastly.

"Surely not; or I should not have come here to see you. I hope you do not doubt my interest in the matter."

"I do not doubt your interest in the matter," repeated the lady.

Marlitt did not like her looks or tones. They savored of suspicion. Just then young Duclos came into view, and he rose to greet him. The salutation was cold and stiff on both sides.

"I have wished to see you, Mr. Duclos," the visitor said. "Since I saw you last I have repented of my resolution to dispose of the hand of my step-daughter in opposition to her wishes and those of her mother. Henceforth I shall be guided by them."

"I thank you, sir," returned the young man. He looked at the lady, uncertain what ground she wished him to take.

"It would afford me great pleasure," resumed Marlitt, "to give my formal consent to your marriage; to hasten its celebration, indeed, before I leave England."

"You intend leaving England?" asked Madeleine, striving to command herself.

"I am going to Constantinople. As I said—I am ready to bestow on this young gentleman, if you so wish it, my full and free consent to his marriage with our daughter."

"When she is found—" began Madeleine.

"I supposed she had returned ere this. Have you not heard from her?"

"The servants brought a frightful account," replied Frank, coming to the aid of Madeleine, "of the carriage having been attacked by robbers—"

"Indeed! Was it not very late? I think it was the same evening I was here last. Was it not, madam?"

Madeleine bowed. She could not trust herself to speak.

"Where was she going so late?" asked Marlitt, watching her furtively.

"I will tell you, sir," she replied, her eyes flashing defiance. "I had purposed sending her into Sussex, to be married there, to save her from your machinations. Mr. Duclos was to have joined her at the station. She was stopped near Waterloo Bridge; masked ruffians dragged her from the carriage; the horses took fright and fled homeward; the coachman lost control over them; the footman and he brought the tidings to me!"

"Has no search been made for her?" asked the gentleman, growing pale in spite of his efforts to preserve his self-possession.

"Surely search was made! You do not suppose I would leave my child to perish without help!"

"And no trace has been found?"

"No trace whatever! Suspicion only indicates the perpetrators of the cruel deed!"

Marlitt lifted his eyes to his wife's face. It was strange that she should seem more indignant than grieved at the loss of her child. He felt her burning gaze, and quailed under it.

MY FIRST BOOTS.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

A proud old realm was ancient Rome,
Her lines no boundary knew,
O'er all the known world of the time
Her regal eagles flew:
Before her bowed a thousand kings,
And all their treasures brought—
And yet, that realm, with all its wealth
And pride, could not have bought
My first new boots.

I looked at them with happy eyes,
And oh! they made me vain;
I put them on a thousand times,
And pulled them off again.
I walked about the streets more proud
Than any boy in town;
I was by far the happiest
When I was looking down
At my new boots.

There's beauty in the landscape fair,
And in the bright dewdrops;
A thousandfold more loveliness
Was in their bright red tops.
I told each boy I met, but still
My joy could not be told;
I thought they fitted well, although
About four years too old.
Were those new boots.

I brushed each speck of dust from them;
I pressed them to my lip,
The dearest, fondest, sweetest things
That ever were made of kip!
I held them for a friendship which
None but an archie felt,
Although in slipping up and down
They blistered both my heels,
Did those new boots.

Alas, one day upon the ice
I slipped into some holes;
To dry them at the fireplace
I set them on the coals;
But oh! when I came back again,
I found them done up brown;
They'd got a little bit too warm,
And sadly melted down—
Those nice new boots!

I screamed out in the kitchen, and
Along the hall I bawled;
I roared behind the pantry door,
And on the next I quailed;
My father grabbed a handy lath,
And helped along the tale,
And said again: "I'll (spat) get (spat) you
Will not (spat) get (spat) soon
Any more boots!"

Paul Jones' Protege.

A SEA STORY OF 1778.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

One blustering evening in the month of April, 1778, several stately vessels of war, flying the gaudy colors of England, lay at anchor in the spacious harbor of Carrickfergus, in Ulster, Ireland. On the deck of each an unwonted activity was manifested, and a number of naval officers, arrayed in full uniform, were gazing through sea-glasses at a rather suspicious craft which lay to sea. The suspected vessel had managed to display nothing but its stern to the English officers, who were undecided what to designate her, and the longer they looked, the more puzzled they became.

"Well, uncle, what do you make out of her?" asked a lovely English girl who stood beside the commander of the largest vessel—the Delahoven.

The sea-glass was lowered, and the officer looked down upon the girl with a puzzled expression.

"I make out, Myra, that she is a suspicious craft—a very suspicious one," he said, at length, "and I would not be surprised to hear that she was the Ranger, whose rebel commander has struck terror to the inhabitants of the coast cities."

"What! uncle Mortimer, do you think that Paul Jones would be so bold as to sail near our city while so many vessels lie in the harbor?"

"He is bold enough to do any thing, girl," responded the officer. "Witness his attack on Whitehaven, and his attempt to abduct his grace, the Earl of Selkirk."

"Those were bold undertakings," said the girl, in a tone of admiration, which she did not try to conceal. "Commodore Jones is a brave man!"

The officer shot her a withering look of scorn.

"Myra, you are fast becoming a rebel," he said. "I wonder if you do not chafe to be a rebel spy?"

"I'd sooner be a rebel spy than the bride your machinery would make me to-morrow. Were father alive, there would be none of this."

She spoke now in a tone of indignation, and a look told in what contempt she held the uniformed man at her side.

"I am sure your father would have been proud of the match," he said. "He always looked favorably upon the Yarricks of Yarrickford, and in his last letter to me—a letter dictated, as you are aware, upon his death-bed—he told me to choose a husband for you when you should have reached the proper age."

"But, sir, he trusted in your judgment of a good life-partner," said the girl, "and I know he intended that there should be some love in the match. But whom do you choose? A man who has disgraced an honored name—a man who possesses nothing pleasing save a handsome face, and even that is marred by the footprints of his vices. But he has gold: ah! in that auriferous metal lie your reasons for choosing him from among those whom I could love—from among men with principles, for he has none."

"Be careful how you talk, Myra," said the haughty officer, glancing at a group of men standing near the wheel, and surveying the suspicious craft. "He might hear you—he, your future lord. I tell you, girl," he continued, before she could pour forth her heart's scorn for the man her uncle and guardian had doomed her to wed, "it is no use for you to act unwomanly in this delicate case. When I brought you out in this harbor, I said that you should be a bride before you entered Carrickfergus again, and, as you know, I'm not the man to break my word. Yes, let me tell you again, for fear that you might forget, and he lowered his head, and almost hissed the words into her ears, "that on the morrow, in this vessel, you become the bride of Yorkly Yarrick."

She stepped from him a pace, and, with a furtive glance at the suspected craft, she uttered the determined and defiant "Never!"

"Oh, you've said that before," laughed the Delahoven's commander; "but when the hour comes, you'll be as docile as a lamb, and smile upon the union of Yarrick and Teviotside."

She did not reply to him, but turned, and sought her chamber below.

Sir Mortimer Crawford had set his heart upon the wedding which was to take place on shipboard the following day. Almost bankrupt himself, he had been promised a large sum of money by the youthful owner of Yarrickford, for the hand of his beautiful orphaned niece. With the eagerness of a man in his situation, he grasped the golden offer, and now he stood upon the eve of the fulfillment of his part of the infamous bargain.

The wind, which had blown briskly all day, did not transform itself into a gale in the evening, as many had prophesied, and, just as darkness settled over the city and harbor of Carrickfergus, the suspicious craft was ascertained, to a certainty, to be the dreaded Ranger, commanded by the redoubtable Paul Jones.

Of late the gallant commodore had spread terror and dismay along the coast of Great Britain, and his name was uttered by the English in conjunction with the dreaded cognomen—Captain Kyd. Once before he had driven several vessels into the port of Carrickfergus, and, when he sailed away, he told the people that he would return at no distant day, and levy a heavy contribution on the city.

As the night was now fairly on, a council was called on board of the Delahoven, and it was resolved to attempt the capture of the bold American by strategy. The Ranger was seen to anchor just beyond the harbor, with the audacity characteristic of Paul Jones, and the officers of the British fleet believed that it was his intention to bombard the city on the following day. Their little fleet was in no capacity for sailing—having run into Carrickfergus for repairs—and this Jones evidently knew.

"We must proceed with extreme caution," said Sir Mortimer at the council. "The greatest care must be taken in the muffling of the oars, and no man shall leave the boats until the proper signal has been given."

Thus was Paul Jones to fall an easy prey to the British navy; by a night surprise, in boats with muffled oars, was his victorious career on the high seas to be brought to an abrupt termination.

Before the council adjourned, a dark figure suddenly appeared on the deck of the Delahoven, whose lights had been extinguished, that Paul Jones should remain ignorant of the position of his foes. This figure glided to the davits, and with dispatch but quietude, lowered a boat over the vessel's side. This

accomplished, without attracting attention from the watches, who had sought each other's companionship and were discussing the purposes of the council, the ghostly form swung itself over the vessel's gunwale, and alighted in the polluted boat.

Then there was the grasping of oars, the steady strokes, which the wind, whistling around the Delahoven, kept from the sailors' ears, and the tiny bark, with its single occupant, skimmed over the crests of the waves, which seemed ready to engulf it at any moment.

Could the clouds have been chased away, the stars would have looked down upon the face of Myra Crawford, upon which an expression of triumph sat enthroned. She plied the oars with a skill that proclaimed her her beautiful mistress, and, when once beyond ear-shot of the English fleet, she made no secret of her nocturnal mission, and the boat shot forward to the noisy strokes of the oars, with new impetus.

At length she was conscious that a great black object lay between her and the gloomy horizon, and presently she heard the welcome cry of:

"Boat ahoy!"

She answered the American watch in a tone and words which secured her a speedy foothold on the Ranger's deck, and a few moments later she found herself in the presence of John Paul Jones, whose hands had raised the first American flag on shipboard!

Myra saw at once that the commodore anticipated no night attack, and in a few sentences she apprised him of his danger. "Ah, we will fix the red-coats!" cried he, a smile playing with his lips. "Girl, on behalf of my country, I thank you, and I assure you that your heart shall beat with pride at this night's work. Of course you do not wish to return to Teviotside at present?"

"Not while he—my uncle—continues my guardian. Another year, sir, and I am my own mistress."

"Then, my brave lassie, until that time you must be my protegee. There's a fireside in Philadelphia at which you will be welcome, and when the cloud of war shall have passed over the colonies, Teviotside will greet you again."

Paul Jones' protegee! Myra knew that she had a protector now—one who could shield her against the arm of Sir Mortimer Crawford, against the machinations, too, of Yorkly Yarrick!

A strange light danced in the sailor's eyes when he bade his second-officer show our heroine a state-room, and turned to the men who surrounded him.

With them he exchanged a few words, and half an hour later every thing was silent again on the Ranger's decks. But that silence seemed ominous, and boded no good to the British, who, with muffled oars, were approaching the ship.

At length, about midnight, while the

wind shrieked mournfully among the sails, seven boat-loads of British sailors, headed by Sir Mortimer Crawford in person, paused beneath the Ranger's bow. It was evident that Myra's absence was not known by her guardian, else the surprise had been given over; and, to tell the truth, Sir Mortimer believed his ward and niece asleep in her state-room, dreaming about the bridal he had prepared for her.

No cry of "boat ahoy!" greeted the ears of the surprise-party, and like specters, and as silent, the Britons gained the Ranger's decks. With feeble resistance, which was soon overcome, the watches were secured, and a strong guard was thrown around the hatches.

"The redoubtable pirate is ours," said Sir Mortimer, with haughty mien and in a low tone, to Yorkly Yarrick, who had accompanied the expedition for the purpose of sharing in the glory of capturing Paul Jones. "I never dreamed of such an easy victory. I'll go below and inform the second Kyd that he is ours. 'Here, fellow!' to one of the captured watches; 'lead me to the cabin of your rebel commander.'"

The sailor obeyed with alacrity, and a few moments later Sir Mortimer stood before the commander's cabin.

He pushed the watch aside, threw wide the door, crossed the threshold, and, in amazement, confronted Paul Jones in full uniform.

In a moment, however, Sir Mortimer had recovered his composure.

"Sir, I summon you to surrender yourself and vessel to his majesty George the Third, through me, Sir Mortimer Crawford, his royal lieutenant."

A smile wreathed the lips of the gallant Paul Jones as he stepped back a pace, and grasped a green cord that hung from the ceiling.

"Sir Mortimer Crawford, this is the grandest mistake of your life," said the invincible sea-dog. "You are my prisoner!"

At the words of Paul Jones, and the sounds of a tumult above his head, the haughty Briton shrunk back aghast, and before he could find his tongue, shouts of triumph were pealing from American throats. He was, indeed, Paul Jones' prisoner, for,

in making manifest their most prominent points.

But, amid the many there were three in whom Joe and myself at once became interested; the "three inseparables" we came to call them, and who, for certain reasons, we set ourselves to watch over with a species of fatherly interest.

Two of them were young men, just arrived at manhood, perhaps, while the other was one of those persons whom we find it impossible to tell whether he be young, middle-aged or old. I declared him to be all of fifty, while Joe maintained that he had never seen half that number of years.

That they were Englishmen was plain to be seen, not only by reason of various outward signs of dress and manner, but because of their very evident distaste for a certain letter in our alphabet.

They were inseparable; lived, slept and worked together, that is when they did work, which was seldom, and this it was that brought upon them the suspicious eyes of the rough miners and mountain men by whom they were surrounded.

Their cabin, and it was one of the best in the settlement, was situated at the head of the valley, some distance removed from any other, as though they were seeking as much privacy as possible, and here they invariably retreated after the day had closed, and with rare exceptions, were seen no more that night.

Steadman's continued to thrive, and each week saw a heavy addition to the temporary or "floating" inhabitants.

Such was the condition of affairs, when, one morning, the community were startled by a report that a murder most foul, coupled with robbery, had been perpetrated in a ranch located upon the mountain-side.

All hastened thither; and, sure enough, some fiend or fiends had been at work, leaving behind them, as ghastly relics thereof, the two gashed and gory corpses of the miners they had slain.

The excitement was intense, and long and careful was the search made for the murderers, for we were satisfied there must have been more than one, but without avail.

They had done their work skillfully, coolly, as practiced hands only could have done,

On reaching the cabin it was found to be deserted, the men, as it afterward turned out, having gone up the mountain to examine what appeared a favorable spot.

Without reflecting how natural this was, the regulators at once declared their absence proof positive of their guilt, that they were fleeing from justice, and must be at once captured.

It was toward evening when this discovery was made.

No time was to be lost, as they would get beyond reach of pursuit, and hence a dozen active men, hastily arming, took their trail and started to make the arrest.

The afternoon passed and darkness was settling down upon Steadman's, and yet no news had come of the pursuing party.

Another hour passed, and then a sudden tumult in the valley below informed Joe and I that something unusual was taking place.

It was the regulators returning with their prisoner—only one, for the other two had been slain during the fight that necessarily followed their resistance to capture.

The one brought in had been desperately wounded, was indeed hardly alive when we reached the place where he lay.

Hastening back to my tent, I returned with such instruments, bandages, etc., as were necessary in the case, and in the course of an hour had so far revived the man as to permit of his talking.

This he was evidently anxious to do, and the first use he made of his new-born, though temporary, strength was to make a full and complete confession of his and his comrades' guilt, not only in the murder with which they were charged, but in several others more revolting.

This being done, and he was now fast sinking again, he requested that he might be left alone with me for a few moments, as he had an important revelation to make.

The man was to all appearance dying; there could be no possible reason why his request should not be complied with, and so the room was cleared.

I need not here detail the chapter of horrors he unfolded. Suffice it to say that the path pursued by himself and comrades since coming out to the country had literally been marked with blood, while of the robberies enumerated I can not recall the half.

"But," he continued, "there is another matter. I have a large sum of money, together with a quantity of dust, which was not gained either by murder or robbery, and which is secreted in a place of which I will tell you on one condition."

"I demanded the condition."

"There is," he said, "living in the little town of W—, Indiana, an old man who once did me a kindness. I swore to repay it, and unless you assist me, I can not keep that oath."

"Here," he continued, taking a small, soiled package, the size probably of one's thumb, from a pocket in his buckskin breeches, "here are the directions. You can not miss the place. Get the money; keep half of it yourself, and by some means send the remainder to the address you will also find inclosed there. You say I am as good as a dead man. Well, then, I swear that there is not a drop of blood, nor of dishonesty either, upon one shilling of the money I offer you. Will they hang me if I get well?" he suddenly said, changing the subject with startling rapidity, while his eye lit up with a sudden glare.

"Never mind that now," I said. "You—"

"You mean to say they would. Well, it is best to be sure!"

And with a motion as quick as thought, and before I had the faintest idea of his intention, he reached by me to where my instruments were lying upon a candle-box, seized a large-sized scalpel, and, with desperate force and swiftness, drew the keen edge across his throat.

I felt the warm blood gush in my face and eyes, and by the time I had cleaned the latter sufficiently to see, the murderer was dead.

The day following I submitted the man's secrets to the head miners, and it was unanimously voted, that if the money was really there, I must follow the injunctions.

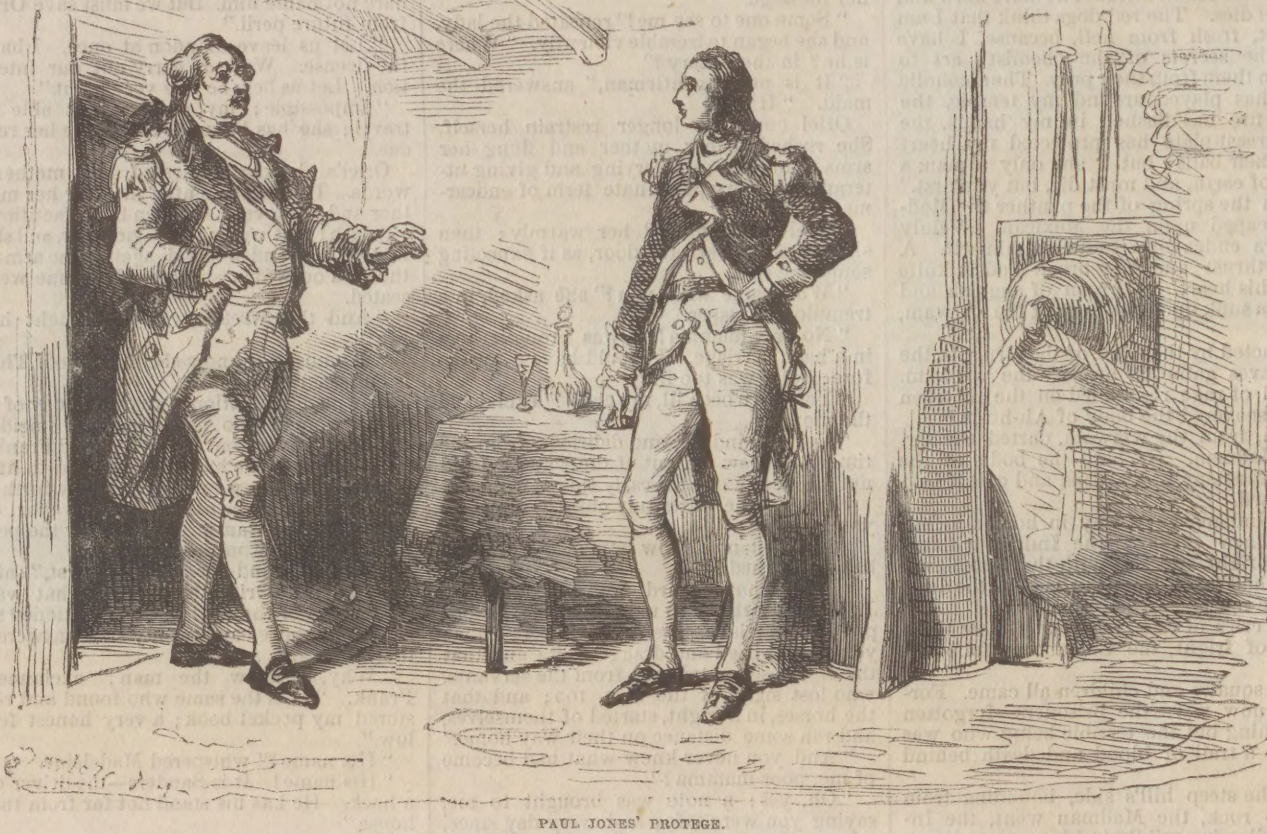
It was there, a large sum, and with it I departed to find the old man in the States. He had been dead several years, but to his children, now well-to-do in the world, the stranger's legacy was a most acceptable gift.

Short Stories from History.

Love and Friendship.—Two male negroes in one of the West India Islands, nearly of the same age, and eminent among their fellows in slavery for gracefulness of figure, strength, agility and dexterity, were also distinguished for their mutual friendship, and for their common attachment to a young female negro, who was generally esteemed the most beautiful of her complexion in the whole island. The young female appeared to be equally pleased with both her lovers; and was willing to accept either of them for a husband, provided they could agree between themselves which of them was willing to yield to the pretensions of the other. But here lay the difficulty; for while neither would treacherously supplant, neither of them was willing to yield to his friend. The two youths therefore long suffered the severest affliction, while their hearts were torn between love and friendship.

At length, when they were no longer able to endure the agony of such a contest, being still unable to repress their passion for their lovely countrywoman, and incapable of violating the laws of friendship, on a certain day they both, in company with the object of their ill-fated love, retired into a wood adjoining the scene of their labors. There, after fondly embracing the maid, calling her by a thousand endearing names, and lamenting their own unhappy fate, they stabbed a knife into her breast; which, while still reeking with her blood, was by each of them in his turn plunged into his own. Her cries reached the people who were at work in the next field; some of them hastening to the spot, found her expiring, and the youths already dead beside her.

Had the elevated souls of these negro youths been refined and enlightened by culture and education in the principles of morality and true religion, it may reasonably be supposed that their friendship would have triumphed over their love, without prompting them to the rash and desperate deed which they committed, in order to extricate themselves from the predicament in which their love and friendship had placed them.



PAUL JONES' PROTEGE.

at a signal from the American, the Ranger's crew had sprung upon the British from beneath old piles of cordage, the interior of boxes, and down from hiding-places among the sails.

Never was a surprise-party taken so aback, and when the Ranger sailed from the port of Carrickfergus, Myra Crawford had the pleasure of looking upon her uncle, and would-be husband, prisoners of war. They vowed that they would have revenge for the girl's work, but she laughed their chagrin to scorn, and wished them a merry prison-life when she parted company with them at Philadelphia.

The name and deed of Paul Jones' protegee at once became associated with those of other heroines of the "days that tried men's souls," and when she returned to Teviotside, at the close of the war, it was as the bride of the Ranger's second officer—the man of her own love and choice. Sir Mortimer did not long survive the disgrace into which his night expedition threw him; for he died before he could be exchanged, and so soon as Myra could dispose of her estate, she took up her abode in the United States, where she and her husband lived to an advanced age, enjoying the blessings they had helped to secure.

Camp-Fire Yarns.

Striking a Rich "Lead."

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

STEADMAN'S Claim, as it was then called, had suddenly begun to yield enormously, and, as such things can not well be kept a secret, the consequence was that the gold-seekers began to pour in from every quarter.

The "Claim" was an old locality that had, the year previous, been unsuccessfully worked and deserted, but some enterprising individuals had tried it again, and with such good result that, as I have said, the news flew like wildfire all over the State.

Among others who drifted thither were Joe Bently and myself, both of us still clinging to the delusive hope that had led us so far, that something would surely "turn up" this time at least.

As the miners began to pour in, thicker and faster each day, the inevitable "shanty" room-like, along the hill-sides and down in the valley, until before a great while, what was so recently a perfect wilderness, took on something the appearance of a thriving village.

Under such circumstances there would come together, as a matter of course, a great variety of characters, good, bad and indifferent, and, under these same circumstances, these different characters would not be long

and departed with their treasure in gold-dust, which of itself could not betray, leaving no sign behind.

Weeks passed, and the excitement was gradually dying out, when again was it revived with tenfold force by the fact of another, and this time far more horrible, murder than the others.

A miner, the woman who kept his shanty in order for him, and a young Mexican lad, who had wandered out to Steadman's, and "lived round" as opportunity offered, were found stabbed to death upon the floor of the hut, while the overturned condition of things inside showed how complete the search had been for treasure.

The same characteristics in manner and shape of wounds were found here as they had been in the previous case.

All the blows had been dealt with a double-edged knife, and all showing that they had been given by a steady, powerful hand. None of them were superficial. Each and every blow had sought and found a vital spot.

It would be impossible to depict the rage of the rough miners and mountaineers. I verily believe that could the culprits have been caught at the moment they would have been subjected to torture that would have shamed the most fearful ever inflicted by an Indian war-party.

In the midst of all, our three Englishmen behaved with that coolness, or rather stolidity, so peculiar to that people. They expressed a sufficient amount of indignation, advocated the immediate formation of a Vigilance, shook their heads, and—retreated to their ranch.

"Ralph," said my chum, one evening, as we sat smoking in our door, "I'll be—no I won't, but I think I can put my finger on the men who have done these murders."

I was not at all surprised, for I had been having my own thoughts about the matter.

"Yes, I know," I replied, nodding up the valley, "but, don't say it yet. They may be innocent, and, you know, it would only require the mere hint of suspicion to insure their being torn limb from limb."

"We will wait," said Joe, philosophically.

"Yes, let us wait."

But we had not long to do so. In some unaccountable way, a rumor got out that some one had accused the Englishmen of being the murderers.

Eager to grasp at any thing that might possibly lead up to the discovery of the miscreants, the people seized upon this, and passing it from mouth to mouth, each one to be a direct charge, uttered positively by half the population of Steadman's.

In less than an hour the mob was on its way up the valley, eager to arrest and bring to judgment the men whom they had already, in their own minds, doomed to death.